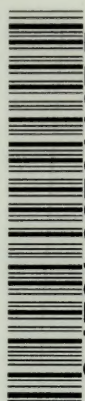


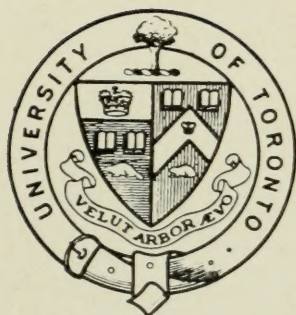
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# STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES



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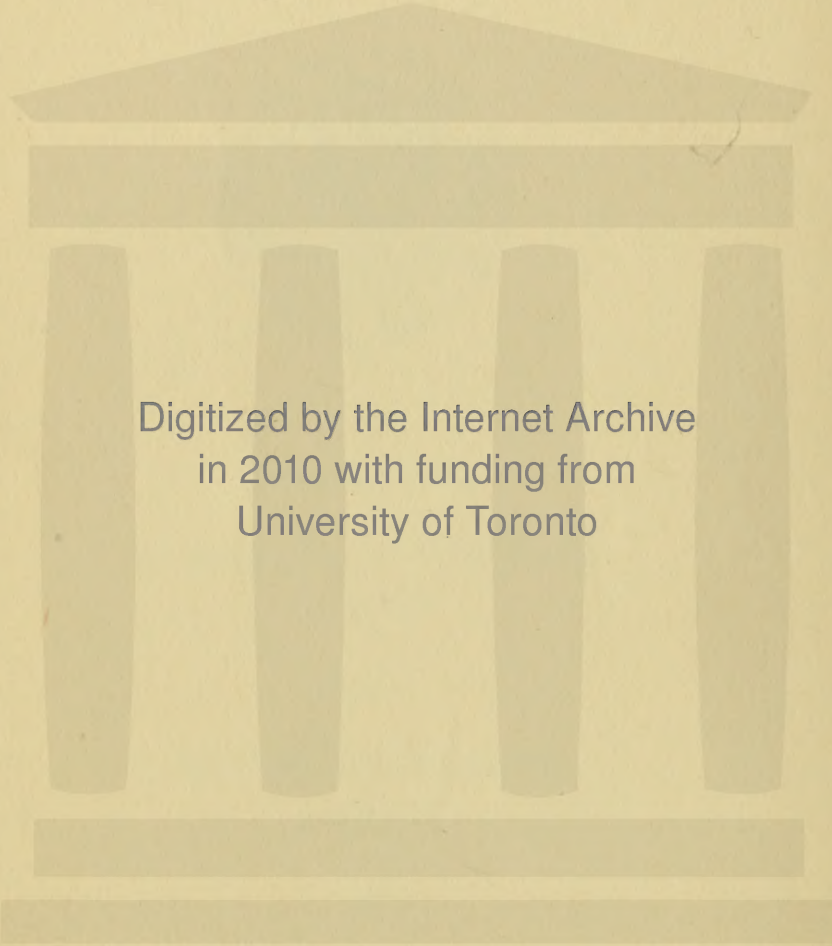




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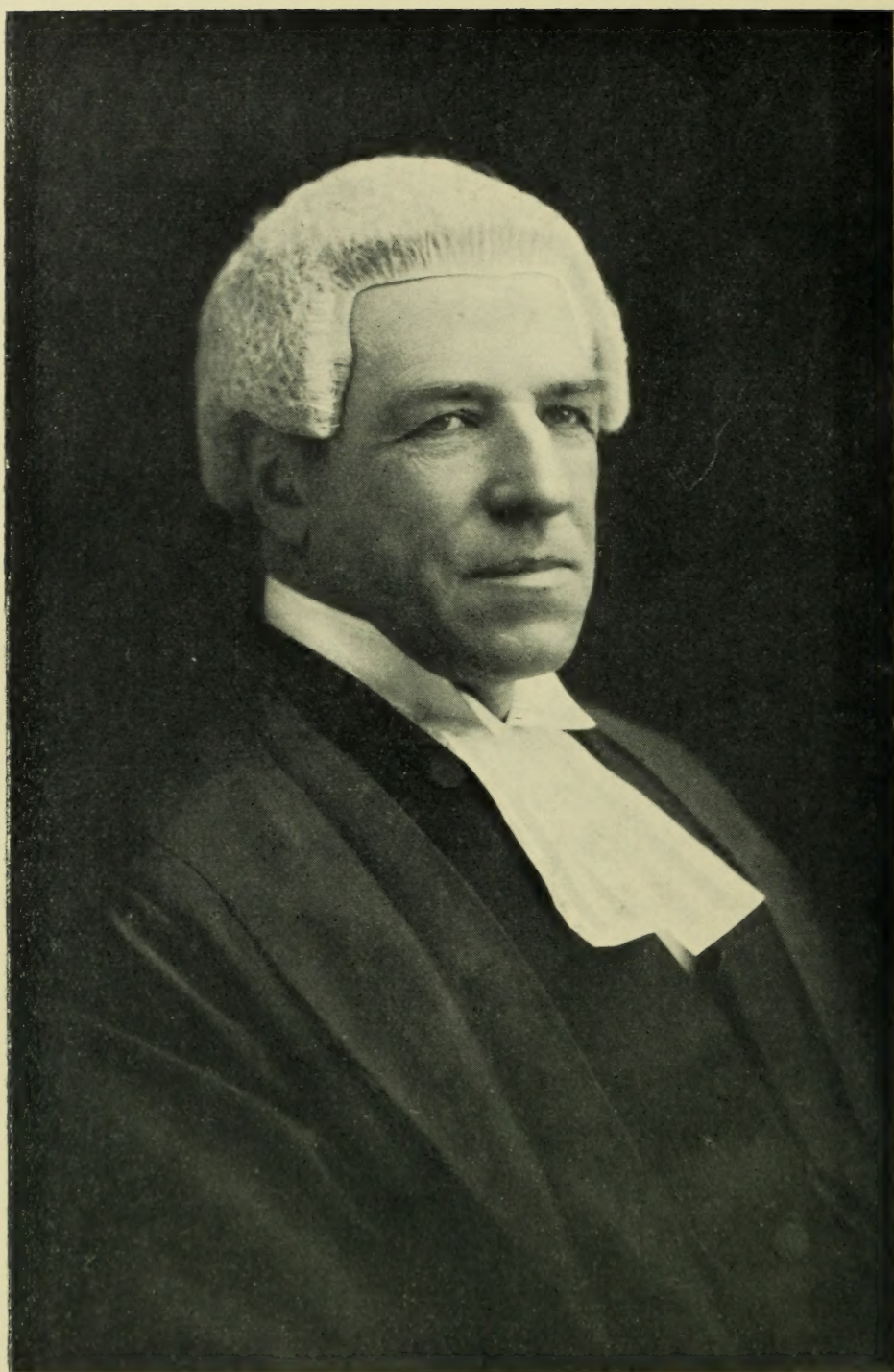
STRAY THOUGHTS  
AND MEMORIES











*Samuel A. Kent*



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# STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

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BY

JAMES A. RENTOUL, K.C., LL.D.

A JUDGE OF THE CITY OF LONDON COURT AND COMMISSIONER  
OF THE CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT

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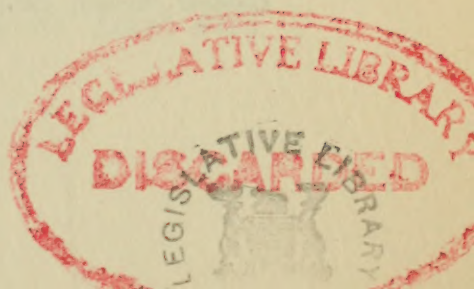
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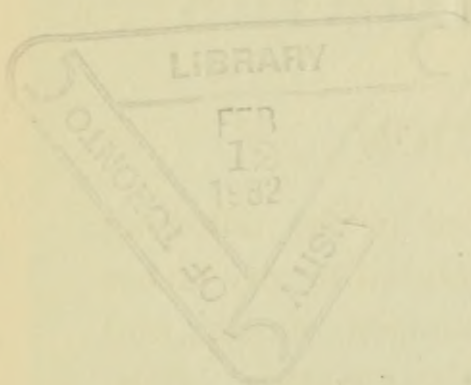
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## INTRODUCTION

THE “ Memories ” contained in the following pages were jotted down or dictated by my father as a distraction during prolonged illness, and were not intended by him for publication. It is, therefore, only after considerable hesitation that it has been decided to include them in a volume, giving his views regarding certain social and political questions, on which he felt very strongly during his whole life, and on which he spoke and wrote frankly and fearlessly.

My father's early life was passed in Ireland, which always remained the land of his affection; neither time nor his lengthy sojourn in England robbed him of his Irish sympathies and characteristics. His education was received at private schools and later in the Queen's University, where he took the degrees of B.A., LL.B., and LL.D. with First Honours. Although at the time he had no idea of taking up a legal career, the study of Law seems to have had a special attraction for him; he therefore chose to make it his special subject at the University, with the result that he gained three scholarships in Law and

## INTRODUCTION

several first prizes and exhibitions; later, when he came to England and definitely studied for the Bar, he was awarded first place and also the Scholarship in Equity of One Hundred Guineas.

After spending some considerable time at the Berlin University and in Brussels, he obtained the Senior Scholarship in Modern Continental Languages and Literature, subjects which were to him always a recreation and a hobby.

On quitting the University he was appointed to the Church in which he had been preceded by his father, grandfather, and great grandfather; and during the ten years of his ministry there he attained a position as a preacher and lecturer on religious and social questions as distinguished as he afterwards reached in England as a political speaker.

Various considerations led him to decide to come to England and to turn his attention to Law, in which he had always been keenly interested.

Though without influence of any kind he made his way so quickly in what he himself described as "the most precarious of careers" that he was able to take silk in eleven years, and was appointed a Judge within seventeen years of being called to the Bar.

When the London County Council was brought



## INTRODUCTION

into existence my father was elected, together with Colonel Hughes, M.P., to represent Woolwich, and remained a Member of the Council for some years.

In 1890, at the urgent request of some of the Unionist leaders, he consented to become a Candidate for the parliamentary division of East Down; his election was unopposed, and for twelve years he represented that constituency in the House of Commons, being returned without opposition at three successive General Elections.

Few men of his day were more frequently asked to contest seats in the Unionist interest or more sought after by Parliamentary Candidates desiring a helping hand at elections, and few—if any—were more successful in winning the sympathies of the most varied classes of electors, or in dealing with interruptions or opposition from political opponents.

It is no exaggeration to say that he took part in hundreds of contested elections, and in many cases his speeches, though reported verbatim in the local Press, were printed in pamphlet form and distributed in thousands throughout the country.

As an after-dinner speaker his popularity was unrivalled.

From 1902 until 1919 he was a Judge of the

## INTRODUCTION

City of London Court and a Commissioner at the Old Bailey.

Until a few months before his death my father enjoyed perfect health, and retained to a remarkable degree the buoyant spirits of youth; both were seriously impaired by family bereavement, and after a trying illness he passed away on the 16th August, 1919.

GERVAIS RENTOUL.

*2 Harcourt Buildings,  
Temple.*



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# STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

## PART I

### CHAPTER I

#### RECOLLECTIONS

WHEN Job said, "Oh that mine adversary had written a book," must he not have been thinking of some form of reminiscences, for surely by no other species of literature could any one so easily give occasion to the enemy?

As there is no new thing under the sun, it may be assumed that reminiscences were as common in Job's time as they are to-day, and probably ere then a precursor of Abraham Cowley had pointed out that "It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement; and the readers' ears to hear anything of praise for him."

It seems, however, as if, in the closing years of life, men fall easy victims to an epidemic which takes a more or less virulent form according to the nature and previous habits of the persons afflicted by the malady.

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

The germ of this malady (reminiscence writing) was first implanted in me many years ago by a representative of a noted publishing firm, and was fostered later by others; but, flattered as I was by their requests, I could not persuade myself that my doings or sayings, however interesting to me, could be of any interest to the public; nor could I believe that success as a speaker indicated any capacity for wielding a pen; and I was quite aware that it was only the reputation gained by me as a speaker which could lead any publisher to desire my reminiscences.

Now, however, when the days and hours drag heavily, and the suggestion has once again been made to me, it is pleasant to jot down some recollections of men and things that have interested me, and to consider three subjects on which I feel more deeply with every passing year.

When touching on merely personal matters, I shall try to remember two incidents from which I learned a lesson years ago. One concerned a village saddler to whom I took a bridle to be mended. After I explained my business, he said, "This is a great wedding that's coming off." "What wedding?" I asked. "Oh, the one they're all talking about," was the reply; and it was only after further questioning I learned



## RECOLLECTIONS

that the “great wedding” was his own, and the interest which he thought was universal I knew to be confined to himself and his expectant bride.

The other lesson was inculcated a dozen years later when a very sensible, successful business man of mature years told me solemnly and seriously in regard to his coming marriage, which was of no special moment to any but the contracting parties, that “there had been no such excitement in Belfast over any wedding since that of the Prince of Wales !” So, when inclined to grow verbose over what may be of interest or importance to myself, I hope I shall remember the saddler’s wedding.

. . . . .  
In order to have any memories or any opinions, I must have been born ! That interesting event took place at Manor Cunningham, County Donegal, where I had my home for over thirty years.

I was born to a great inheritance, for I am the son of parents whose lives were an example in all that makes for worthy living, and whose memories are an inspiration to those who represent them to-day.

It is said that no one with Scottish blood in his veins ever fails to mention the fact ; so, in order to be no exception to this rule, I may say

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

that my grandfather, Rev. James Rintoul, was appointed by his Presbytery in Scotland to undertake two years' work in Ireland. He regarded this appointment as little less than a sentence of exile, but found his apprehensions so far from having any foundation that he spent his remaining fifty years in Donegal. His great grandfather had fled from France as a refugee after the Edict of Nantes, and he also remained true to the land which had afforded him protection, and spent the rest of his life in Perth. Those of his descendants who remained in Scotland have written their names Rintoul: those in Ireland Rentoul, whilst those who settled in America adopted Rantoul as their patronymic.

My father led the quiet life of a country clergyman, serving from youth to age the congregation which his father had served before him, and perhaps no man ever received a greater tribute than was paid to him when, after his death, the congregation remained without an ordained minister for seven years until I (a first year student) completed my course in Arts and Divinity and was ordained as his successor.

He was a peace-loving man, peace-loving to a fault, but it was his lot to live in strenuous and troubled times and to be often forced into the fighting ranks.

## RECOLLECTIONS

He was comparatively young when the terrible famine, so vividly described by the late A. M. Sullivan in *New Ireland*, devastated the country. In those tragic days men and women of every class forgot themselves, and united in the endeavour to mitigate sufferings which even to-day one shudders to recall. The famine was followed by a cholera epidemic which turned Ireland into a veritable graveyard. As a preventive measure, or one which at least might greatly alleviate the miseries of the people, my father led in a movement to have a hospital erected in his parish. These institutions, now so beneficent and so perfectly equipped and managed, were at that period very defective, and regarded with mistrust and something approaching dread by the majority of the people, especially in rural districts, so, a storm of opposition being raised, the project had to be abandoned. One of the objections urged was that my father, who was an M.D. of Edinburgh, would, for personal reasons, force those suffering from any illness whatever into this hospital.

It was only panic and terror which could have induced even the most ignorant to listen to such a suggestion. The scheme, however, was given up, and, by a strange coincidence, the first home in the parish to be stricken with this terrible



## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

plague, was that of the ringleader in opposing the hospital, and in attributing such very unworthy motives to the originator of the plan. In the dead of night this man came to my father in an agony of terror to seek medical aid for one of his family, which, I need hardly say, was instantly and whole-heartedly rendered.

The portion of Scripture read on the preceding evening at family worship in our home, began : “Fret not thyself because of evil-doers.” The words seemed so apposite, that the anger which my father naturally felt at the misrepresentations to which he had been subjected vanished, and although he had given up the medical profession for the clerical, yet his time and skill were devoted to the unfortunate sufferers as long as the plague lasted.

Another movement into which he threw all his influence and strength, was that for the promotion of temperance, a cause for which he worked strenuously all his life.

The outlook then was hopeless indeed, as ecclesiastical teaching, medical science and social customs were all calculated to encourage the use of alcohol. Total abstinence was regarded at best as a fad of crazy enthusiasts, and at worst, as a direct defiance of God’s law, and indeed almost suicidal. Little could Father Mathew,

## RECOLLECTIONS

Dr. Edgar and those of lesser fame who led or followed them, have foreseen the American continent "dry," the medical profession foremost in the war against alcoholic drinks, and many people even of the highest rank publicly proclaiming themselves total abstainers.

The next struggle in which he was engaged was on behalf of the Tenant Right movement, a battle for the liberty and rights of the poorer section of the agricultural community, in which it would have been impossible for him to have been anywhere but in the forefront.

Among the younger clergy of the county who gladly followed his leadership, were the Rev. Patrick White of Milford, whose son (Mr. J. C. White) is the present Lord Mayor of Belfast; and the Rev. John Kinnear of Letterkenny, to whom long years afterwards, the farmers of this extremely Catholic and almost entirely agricultural county, paid the signal tribute of electing him to be their representative in Parliament.

My father had been urged to become the Liberal candidate for Donegal, so that he might advocate in the House of Commons, as he was doing outside it, the cause of the tenant farmer; but the work of a large congregation, coupled with indifferent health, prevented his giving



## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

any consideration to the desire of the people; he, therefore, was asked to propose Mr. Campbell Johnston to represent the interests of the tenants, as opposed to Colonel Connelly and Sir Edmund Hayes who upheld the cause of the landlords.

In those days a parliamentary election, with its open voting, and less open bribery, stirred the whole community, every man, woman and even child being fired with enthusiasm for one side or the other, and so at the mature age of five, and at the election referred to, I made my first public appearance and first declaration of my political creed. The speech consisted of one sentence: "Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I am only a very young man, but I promise to be the friend of Tenant Right all the days of my life." This oratorical effort evoked such prolonged applause that I endeavoured to repeat it several times during the meeting, and was only prevented by the threatening glance of my father, who was chairman, and the restraining hand of some one who held me prisoner during the remainder of the evening.

The opening of my first speech is a reminder that old times are changed, old manners gone, for what aspirant to public life would now venture to address his speech to "Gentlemen" only? But in those almost pre-historic days, the appear-



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ance of a member of the gentler sex at any political gathering would have been regarded as almost indecent. Had a candidate's refractory or self-assertive mother or wife or daughter demanded the privilege of listening to the candidate's eloquence some tactful diplomatist would have saved the situation by concealing her behind a screen, and would, by some significant gesture, have led his audience to understand that the state of health of the chairman rendered protection against possible draughts an imperative necessity.

This Donegal election was one of great importance in the long struggle for the ownership of the land in Ireland. It was not only justice for the farmers for which my father contended, he urged also the equal rights to protection of the labourers, advocating that every farmer—his own rights being secured—should be bound to provide not only neat cottages, but also “plots of ground for the labourers and their families whom he employed in the cultivation of the soil.”

Such ideas were denounced by the privileged classes as revolution and spoliation, and no doubt the farmers were as backward in recognising the rights of the labourers as the landlords were in recognising the rights of the tenants.

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

All has come about which seemed then almost impossible of attainment, and has been won without either spoliation or revolution, and although it is rare that men who reap the harvest of stormy springtimes realise the labours and sacrifices of those who ploughed the furrow and sowed the seed, nevertheless it has often gratified me to know that in the struggle between the privileges of a class and the rights of the community, men of my family have always been on the side of the people.

Almost seventy years after the death of Robert Stephen Rintoul, who, aided by a few friends, founded *The Spectator*, the following comment regarding him appeared in a Scottish paper: "Ever ready to take up any scheme which was likely to ameliorate the condition of the working classes, he was one of the first to advocate the emigration and colonisation proposals made by Edward Gibbon Wakefield; and it has been said that there was not an important reform, social or political, achieved during his thirty years as editor in which *The Spectator* did not take a prominent part."

Across the Atlantic my kinsman, Hon. Robert Rantoul and his more distinguished son, Hon. Robert Rantoul, Junior, were enthusiastic supporters of temperance legislation, the abolition of

## RECOLLECTIONS

slavery and other radical reforms. Of the latter, who died at the early age of forty-seven, Whittier, in his elegiac poem entitled “Rantoul,” writes :—

“Dead! he so great, and strong, and wise,  
While the mean thousands yet drew breath;  
How deepened, through that dread surprise,  
The mystery and the awe of death!”

“Through him we hoped to speak the word  
Which wins the freedom of a land;  
And lift, for human right, the sword  
Which dropped from Hampden’s dying hand.”

When thirty-six years after his death his portrait was being placed in the Library of the new Court House, Essex, Mass., U.S.A., where he had early won his great fame, he was described as “One who was untiring in his efforts to secure a political policy which should make adequate provision for the rights and interests of his fellow men in the never-ceasing antagonism between the rights of capital and the rights of labour, and who was true to his sense of duty and allegiance to the cause of humanity in whose service he faltered not nor failed.”<sup>1</sup>

I believe the same statement could be made with equal truth regarding my father and grandfather, although their spheres of work were comparatively so limited, and remote from the public gaze.

<sup>1</sup> Choate, *Cushing, Rantoul*, p. 38.



## CHAPTER II

### THE THREE F'S

THE land question had been a vexed one in Ireland for centuries. The maximum claim fifty years ago for the farmers in Ulster was described as "The Three F's": fair rent, fixity of tenure whilst the rent was paid, and freedom to sell.

Formerly the position of the Irish farmer who had not a long lease was one of abject dependence, and the power of the landlord was little less than that of the slave-owner. That this power was, so far as I know, seldom abused by the landlord (though very often by his underlings), is much to the credit of that class; but when such things could happen as the following, which were known to me, the miserable position of the tenant farmer can be realised.

On a certain estate in Ulster every man who was only a yearly tenant was served with a notice to quit on the day on which he paid his rent, so by this system possible eviction without further notice hung like a dark cloud over almost every home on that estate.

In another case the tenants were obliged to

## THE THREE F'S

make their wills and submit them to the agent for approval, the object being to prevent the payment of any legacies which might make the net insecure. The understanding was that if the approved-of will was not carried out the family would be evicted at the earliest possible moment.

In addition to the precarious financial position in which the tenants stood if they had not long leases of their farms, they were often treated in the most insulting manner, and had to submit to insolence that was galling in the extreme, and far more bitterly resented than any rent, however high.

On one occasion I happened to be in the office of an agent when a man called and said, "I have come to pay the rent of my farm." "Your farm!" retorted the jackanapes at the desk in a most scornful tone, "Your farm—you mean Mr. C.'s farm," and the poor fellow could only abjectly reply, "Well, sir, I mean the farm I pay the rent for."

On another occasion I heard a most respectable man who wished to be very conciliatory to an agent, remark that he was a Conservative, whereupon the agent, with contempt in tone and look, retorted, "You a Conservative! You are just whatever the Marquis tells you to be."

Incidents like these, which were of frequent occurrence, were enough to condemn any system

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

and break the spirit of any people, and it was largely the evil custom of absenteeism that rendered them possible, and led to the necessary and drastic alteration in the land laws of Ireland.

Perhaps nowhere could better or more generous landlords have been found than in Donegal at the period to which I refer. When hard times came and Colonel Connelly was forced to contemplate selling his estate he was implored by his tenants to double their rent and remain himself their protector and friend rather than place a stranger over them.

Though one Earl of Leitrim had such a lust for power as brought death to himself and voluntary exile to his murderers, yet he was never a rack-renter, and those who preceded and those who followed him have rendered the Leitrim name respected and honoured, while that of Hamilton of Baronscourt stands for all that is generous, sympathetic, upright and kind.

These were the landlords who held much of the land and most of the influence in County Donegal at the time of which I speak, but they were the victims of an evil system, and although incapable themselves of inflicting wrong or practising any harshness, wrong and harshness were often inflicted, during minorities or absence, in their name by those jacks-in-office who, clothed in a



## THE THREE F'S

little brief authority, acted after their kind: therefore a system which permitted of many evils had to be swept away.

One of these evils which had a permanent effect on the habits of the people was the raising of rents which frequently followed evidence of prosperity among the tenants. As a consequence the desire to improve their homes, purchase machinery or good farming implements, drain the land, build outhouses, etc., was largely suppressed and habits of thriftlessness engendered.

Undoubtedly much that was helpful as well as picturesque and attractive disappeared with the old land system, but the gain was greater than the loss, and I am glad to remember that my father and his brothers, Rev. James Rentoul of Garvagh, and Rev. John Rentoul of Ballymoney, were among those who took a very active part in bringing about the change.

It will easily be understood that powers such as those I have referred to, powers which made the very bailiff on a property a man to be feared and conciliated, seemed unassailable to many; even long years afterwards when I was doing my best in Parliament to fulfil the promise given in my childhood "to be the friend of the tenant farmer," the late Lord Deramore said to me, "Although territorial influence is gone, and gone

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

for ever, I seem the only landlord able to realise the fact."

I had soon afterwards an illustration of this inability, when a nobleman and great land-owner who had taken an active part in inducing me to enter Parliament at a time and in circumstances far from advantageous to me, informed me that my constituency should now "be represented by one of ourselves" (that is by a landlord), and that, therefore, my resignation was necessary.

In earlier days I should have had no option but to retire, for mine was an almost entirely agricultural constituency, and no farmer who had not a very long lease could have dared to oppose the territorial authorities unless he was willing to be turned out of his home; but the times had changed, and landlords, though unaware of the fact, were no longer omnipotent.

Had I been asked to resign in favour of a Conservative who could get no other seat, I would at once have done so, for there were other constituencies for which I should have had no difficulty in being returned, and which it would have suited me better to represent; but when my resignation was demanded, in the name of landlordism, I declined to acquiesce. I therefore announced a few meetings in East Down, and asked my constituents their wishes; the reply

## THE THREE F'S

in my favour was so unanimous and emphatic that those who were responsible for this intrigue were very thankful when I finally consented to let the matter drop.

The nobleman and the landlord for whom my seat was desired are both dead, and my feeling of indignation has long since vanished, but I have never forgotten the callous selfishness of the whole scheme, or the indifference to my interests which was displayed by those who still thought themselves all-powerful, and imagined they had the old territorial authority ; and I have ever since understood that to-day, as in Bacon's days, there are people who would set your house on fire to roast their eggs, and who are so obsessed by the idea of their own "rights" as to be blind to all sense of justice, who can, in fact, be "naked and not ashamed !"

Although my indignation has vanished, the kindness of one of my fellow-members of whose Irish policy I was one of the most active opponents remains unforgotten. The late Michael McCartan, M.P. for South Down, came to me in the House, and after denouncing in quite unparliamentary language the effort by very powerful men to deprive me of my seat, said : " If you need help in this contest I will go over, and I believe I shall be able to secure you the support of every Catholic in your division."



## CHAPTER III

### EARLY DAYS

HAVING reached the age when men live more in the past than in the present or future, and hark back on the smallest provocation to childhood's days, I often now bethink myself of mine : but as I was neither " misunderstood," " maltreated," nor " highly strung," I have no dramatic experiences to relate.

I had the good fortune to grow up in a home where the fifth commandment was not regarded as a piece of obsolete tyranny, and where children being a law not only to themselves but to their parents was undreamt of; and I had the further good fortune of being educated in my own country, and of having had teachers for whom I entertained the highest respect.

In this connection I may express an oft-felt regret that so many Irish parents seem to regard education out of their own country as desirable for their children. In my opinion it is a distinct loss to spend the early and most impressionable years of life anywhere except in the country in which the after years will probably be spent,

## EARLY DAYS

but especially is it disadvantageous to spend them in a richer country, and among people whose standard of living is likely to create desires impossible of attainment in a land where the average income is much lower.

It is true that an Irish child sent early to England will probably lose his Irish accent, but he will certainly lose much more. He will find on returning to his own country that he has lost touch with those among whom his after life will be spent, and has lost the opportunity for forming friendships which would have been a great pleasure, and probably a great benefit, to him in later years.

Dr. Maurice Hime, a former headmaster of Foyle College, Derry, wrote at considerable length some thirty years ago on this most important subject,<sup>1</sup> and the list which he gives of Irishmen educated exclusively in Ireland who have distinguished themselves in later years must certainly give food for reflection to those whose ambition it is to send their children out of Ireland for their education.

Among the names given as examples of Irishmen educated entirely in their own country are those of Lord Lawrence and his two distinguished

<sup>1</sup> *Home Education, or, Irish Schools for Irish Boys, and Efficiency of Irish Schools.*

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

brothers, Lord Wolseley, Lord Russell of Killowen, Earl Cairns, Sir Robert Hart, Professor Tyndall, etc.

It is therefore evident that Irish parents need not fear that an Irish education will militate against success abroad; whilst the list given by him of Irishmen also educated entirely in their own country who have reached the highest positions there is astonishing, especially in view of the number of boys—estimated by Dr. Hime as at least fifteen hundred—who cross each year to schools in England.

Of course it is equally advantageous for English and Scottish children to be educated in their respective countries, and with those among whom both the work and the pleasure of their after life will largely lie.

I may, as bearing on this subject, quote the words of one of the very highest authorities on educational matters : Matthew Arnold—who says, “The basis of character and aptitudes proper for living and working in any country is no doubt best formed by being reared in that country, and passing the ductile and susceptible time of boyhood there; and in this case Solomon’s saying applies admirably : ‘*As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.*’ ”



## EARLY DAYS

But this scarcely needs to be emphasised, for it is very unlikely that British boys will be sent to Ireland for their education, even if Dr. Hime's claim for the superiority of Irish over other schools were fully recognised.

In all my experience I know only two cases of an Irish University being chosen by English parents for their sons. Trinity College, Dublin, was selected for both in the belief that the education given there was sounder, and the general influences more desirable than were to be found on this side of the Channel.

A quite reasonable dread of a bad provincial accent being acquired which can never be got rid of, is naturally entertained by many parents, but I cannot think it is any drawback when a man's speech indicates where he was born, or in what part of the Empire he has been brought up, so, in passing, I would say: "Never be ashamed of your native parish or of your country unless they have cause to be ashamed of you."

We all know the obloquy that is supposed to be attached to being "A Paisley body," and have heard of the lady who only after long years of closest intimacy confessed to her friend, "As sure as daith A come frae Paisley," but I have never discovered in what way "A Paisley body" differs

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

from any other Scot or why any one should apologise for hailing from that prosperous town.

Once in my green and salad days—but only once—I endeavoured to be “English,” and when asked what occupation I should like to follow, loftily answered, “The B-a-h,” wishing to assume for the moment that my abilities would justify me in aspiring to the legal profession. My interlocutor looked very puzzled and said, “I have never heard of it; what kind of business is that?” and from that day I never attempted to speak “the English.”

To return to my early years, it was in the remote Catholic county of Donegal I had my first proof that no greater fallacy exists than that which teaches that the Irish Catholic is in any respect inferior to the Irish Protestant, or any less fitted to play a useful and honourable part in life; and this view was confirmed in after years when, at the University and elsewhere, I was in intimate contact with those whose faith was different from mine, but whose abilities and ideals were in no way beneath my own, or those of my Protestant acquaintances.

In Donegal, so far as known to me, there was no shadow of sectarian mistrust or animosity; and few things are more pleasant to look back

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upon than the harmony which existed between those of varied class and different creed.

Before passing away from my native county I may say that few parts of Ireland have more historic interest or more varied charm of aspect. Donegal was the birthplace of St. Columkille and his famous biographer St. Adamnan. There also was compiled that valuable historical work, *The Annals of the Four Masters*, and if I remember rightly there are legends connected with Assaroe which make the Flood appear a quite modern event.

To many tourists the hills and glens, the lakes and heather-clad bogs, the cliffs, beaten by the loud resounding Atlantic, and the friendly and gracious ways of the peasantry must surely afford ample compensation for the scarcity of well-equipped hotels or roads pleasing to the fortunate owners of a Rolls-Royce.

I do not know what the feeling in Donegal may be since 1912, but during all my experience, and as far back as family tradition carries me, only the pleasantest and most friendly relationships prevailed between the people, lay and cleric, of all denominations.

One of the most frequent visitors in my father's house was that very distinguished scholar and ecclesiastic, William Archer Butler, Rector of



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Ray, and Professor of Moral Philosophy in Trinity College, Dublin. His successor, Archdeacon Goold, showed equal friendship and brotherly kindness, and had their attitude and that of those who followed them (Rev. James Irwin and Very Rev. Dean Kennedy) been usual, there would, I believe, have been little desire on the part of Non-Conformists for the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church in Ireland. That desire was greatly fostered by the assumption of superiority on the part of many members of that State-created Church, which from no point of view had ever any claim to the title "The Church of Ireland."

With the Catholic Clergy the relations, though not so intimate, were equally friendly. My father's contemporary in the parish was Rev. Michael Martin, P.P. When writing to Mr. Richard Dane, K.C., M.P. for North Fermanagh, (afterwards Judge Dane), giving proof of the possibility of Catholics and Protestants living in the utmost harmony in the same district, Father Martin in a letter given me by Mr. Dane said, "To give you an idea of the respect and affection entertained for Dr. Rentoul by the Catholics of the parish, I do not hesitate to say that they had as much regard for him as for their own parish priest. I remember, too, when old Dr. Patrick

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McGetigan was our Bishop, he, accompanied by myself, paid a complimentary visit to Dr. Rentoul." In this connection the following incident occurs to my memory.

Bishop McGetigan when first visiting his diocese had called on my father, whom he regarded as a co-worker engaged with him in a common war, though fighting under different regimental colours.

A little four-year-old sister of mine, who had never heard the title " Lord " applied to any but the Almighty, on hearing my mother address the Bishop as " My Lord," fled out in search of my father, and with awe-stricken face and breathless but reverent haste, cried out, " Oh ! come in, come in fast, God's in the parlour ! "

It was years after, this quaint little child, who saw nothing incongruous in God appearing as a benign and friendly old gentleman, had entered the eternal home that " the parlour " again received another lord, who, though only a lord temporal, stood high in the esteem and regard of all who knew him.

This was the late Duke of Abercorn, then Marquis of Hamilton, who had just been returned to Parliament as member for the county. One of my sisters had done a little work in connection with his candidature and in some way the Marquis

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heard of it, and drove seven Irish miles on a hired car, over a bleak mountain road to call and thank her.

How many successful candidates, with another election far in the future, or rather with his succession to the House of Lords a near certainty, would have undertaken a similar journey for such a purpose? His act did not surprise me in my youth; it would greatly surprise me now, but perhaps I have grown cynical with the passage of time.

The Scriptures tell of one leper out of ten who returned to give thanks for healing. The percentage is not high, but there are probably some who have not found even one who remembered a service or kindness, when such were no longer required, or in one's power to confer.



## CHAPTER IV

### SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DAYS

WHEN the time came to leave home and prepare for College (the Irish synonym for the University) a chance remark of a clergyman led to my being sent to Cookstown Academy. It was an excellent though inexpensive school presided over in my day by Mr. John A. Smith, and in it I continued to have the advantage I had hitherto enjoyed of mixing with boys of various classes and creeds. The work was hard and constant, and the recreations and amusements very few, but I look back on the days spent there with much appreciation, although, of course, I wrote home the usual schoolboy accounts of hunger, hardships, and general bad treatment;—accounts which rent my mother's heart, but merely caused my father (who, incredible as the fact would have seemed in my eyes, had been a boy himself) to assure her that a healthy lad would not die of hunger in a single term, and that at Christmas my condition could be carefully looked into. With this callously unsympathetic reception of my lamentations, my

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mother had to rest content, and on my return home the picture of ruddy health I found that the parental heart was adamant so far as my sufferings at school were concerned. It would be well if parents whose feelings are lacerated by communications such as mine, and which are very common, could realise that they are only a pose on the part of children, especially of boys, for hardships at the average school of to-day are as non-existent and out of date as Dotheboys Halls for boys or similar establishments for girls; and that parents are best serving their children when they uphold the school and its system, as they uphold, in illness, the doctor and his treatment, or, in normal conditions, the clergyman and his ministrations. Change them if they are unsatisfactory, but do not expatiate on their defects to a jury of young people, if benefit to the young people is expected or desired.

Though in Cookstown Academy there were neither examinations, prizes, reports, scholarships, nor rewards of any sort, better work could not have been done; and the mental discipline and habits of concentration acquired there proved most useful to me, at all events, for Mr. Smith did his best to develop in his pupils what Huxley considered the most valuable result of all educa-

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tion, namely, “the ability to do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not.”

To us, as to all boys, “tuck” of even the most inferior quality bought by ourselves and devoured surreptitiously, or at irregular hours, was preferable to the best that money could purchase had it been supplied by recognised authority and partaken of under the eye of a master.

I had an overcoat with very large pockets, and so the responsible duty of expending to the best advantage the hoarded pence and sixpences of the establishment was frequently entrusted to me.

One day when returning with the “prog,” my pockets swelling on every side, I met the Principal and stood for a few minutes with every appearance of calm whilst he conversed with me. For that display of passive courage I earned as much admiration from my companions as soldier ever did for facing the enemy’s guns, for those were flogging days, and Mr. Smith was not the man to neglect any duty due by him to his boys.

On revisiting the scene of my school-days forty years later, and wishing to recall, if possible, one of the joys of early years, I astonished a grocer’s lad by solemnly asking for “Six penny-



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worth of 'Andy Campbell's lady's fancies'—the delectable sweetmeat of our youth; but either they or I had changed, and they no longer seemed food for the gods to me, though perhaps they did to the little errand boy to whom I made them over.

In my boyhood it was very common for young people to be assured by their seniors that their intellectual capacity was of a very mean order, and that their success in any walk of life was very doubtful.

Their elders seemed to think it an imperative duty to prevent in them any unjustifiable or overweening self-confidence.

This course appears to me entirely the opposite of what ought to be pursued, for I believe a lack of self-confidence is very common, and that much better results would be obtained if all people were encouraged in early years to put forth their best efforts, and then to meet either success or failure with what equanimity they could.

Frequent assurance of my inability ever to pass any examinations led me to approach the ordeal of matriculation in fear and trembling, and therefore it was a matter both of surprise and pride when I found I had acquitted myself to the satisfaction of my examiners.

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In the 'sixties, Ireland had but two Universities, Dublin University, with one College (Trinity), and Queen's University, with three non-resident Colleges, those of Cork, Galway and Belfast. Trinity was, in all but name, almost exclusively Episcopal; Queen's College, Belfast (whose President has always been a Presbyterian minister), was mainly Presbyterian, and Queen's College, Cork, largely Roman Catholic, so in Galway alone was there what might be called mixed education.

The Queen's University was established in 1849 in the hope that it would solve the vexed problem of higher education in Ireland. It was far from doing so, and was strongly disapproved of by the Ultramontane section of the Catholic Church. The Colleges were stigmatised as "Godless Colleges," and so far were they from becoming places where the lion and the lamb could gambol happily together on the slopes of Mount Parnassus and refresh themselves in harmony with each other at the waters of Helicon, that the Queen's University only made confusion worse confounded, and was years ago replaced by the Royal University, which, like the London University, was merely an examining Board.

This also has been done away with and was replaced in 1908 by an educational system,

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which, I understand, works extremely well and gives satisfaction to all concerned.

Belfast would have naturally seemed the place to which a northern student should go for his University course, but as some of my school companions were entering at Cork, it was arranged that I should accompany them there.

Some time previously a wing of this College had been burnt down, whether by accident or design I know not, but the general assumption, for which there appeared to be some circumstantial evidence, was that the fire was not the result of accident, but was the work of some of the official caretakers who had been bribed by the Ultramontane party. Anyhow, the air was electric and the state of feeling very intense, when one day, as some priests and ladies were being shown over the building, and were passing through one of the class rooms, a student flicked towards another a morsel of cinder which accidentally struck one of the visitors. Quick as thought every man was on his feet, and a struggle ensued in which the combatants got pell-mell out into the quadrangle. Professors appeared, and police were summoned, but fortunately, what might have led to very ugly consequences indeed, passed over without serious bodily injury to any one.



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Most dismayed of all was the professor of French, M. Raymond de Vericourt, who, coming from a country where the downfall of a dynasty might be expected at any moment, flung his arms above his head crying out, “ *Une révolution, mon Dieu, une révolution !* ”

He became rather a hero in the eyes of the first-year men, who felt gratified at the idea that what, at worst, could never have exceeded a town and gown row, or a Belfast riot, was regarded by at least one man, even were he only a Frenchman, as a revolution which might have gone down to future ages as the beginning of a new era in the history of Ireland.

Of course it is only when the air is electric and the clouds big with thunder that a very slight incident may be followed by prodigious consequences.

The stool of Jenny Geddes which was intended to reach the Dean in the pulpit (but being aimed by a woman was quite as likely to have struck the sexton in the porch) would never have kindled the wars of the Covenant had not Scotland been ready for revolt; and the stones flung by the *gamins* of Paris would never have begun the wars of the Fronde had not a section of the people been inflamed against the Government.

The streets riots of Belfast would never follow

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an angry word or ill-considered blow did not Orange processions and 12th of July celebrations maintain in Protestants a spirit of unchristian and unchivalrous arrogance, and evoke in the Belfast Catholic a spirit of sullen anger.

“Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth” applies only when the powder is dry, or the flax steeped in oil.

Once in the House of Commons, at a time when political feeling ran high, I saw a little spark kindle a considerable flame. I should scarcely say “I saw,” for I left the chamber with the members calm to the point of somnolence, but when, two minutes later, I reached the gallery and looked below, I found a scene which might have occurred in Donnybrook fair or Billingsgate fishmarket, for the whole House seemed engaged in a free fight.

Irish-like, I rushed to the scene of action, prepared to take a side without waiting to inquire into the *casus belli*; but quickly the better sense of the combatants prevailed, and in a few minutes, all was quiet again. On inquiring into the cause of this volcanic eruption I was told that as the Nationalist members were passing out to the division lobby on a closure vote, Sir Edward Carson said, “Go on, you gang of gaggers!” As our party resorted equally

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to the closure, Sir Edward can have meant nothing more than indulgence in an alliterative pleasantry which his countrymen would have readily understood and answered in kind, but Mr. Logan, an English member of good intelligence and giant strength, who took language at its face value, and not as we Irish often use it, in a Pickwickian or ornamental sense, dropped down beside Sir Edward, and in a tone of wrath and with fist clenched demanded an explanation of what he took to be offensive words. Behind them sat Mr. Hayes Fisher, who knew that a blow from Mr. Logan would be a very serious matter for almost any member of the House, so he made a gesture which seemed like an attack on Mr. Logan, but was in reality only intended to shield Sir Edward. Then came the proof that man is a fighting animal, even when hidebound by parliamentary precedent and subdued by “Varsity” education and the weight of years—for it really looked as if every one present had some one by the throat! Happily this resort to physical violence, probably for the first, and it is to be hoped the last, time in the history of the House of Commons, was abandoned in a few minutes, because, as I have said, the better sense, judgment and taste of the House quickly prevailed.



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The *débris* left on the field of battle consisted of a tooth and a stud, but as the tooth proved to be artificial, and the stud of brass, neither was ever claimed by the owner !

. . . . .

My student days at Cork are ever memorable, as it was during my session there that life's first great sorrow fell upon me. I received a letter from my grandfather, written in the old-fashioned stately way, informing me very briefly that my father was ill and that I was required at home, and simply adding "We are apprehensive that he may not recover." My father was dead when this letter which caused me no anxiety was written.

As easily could I have imagined the heavens without the sun as life without my father; but my room-mate and life-long friend (now Rev. J. B. Armour of Ballymoney) evidently knew what the letter meant, and saw to it that I left for home by the first train from Cork. No shadow darkened my journey, but at Omagh, where I happened to buy a northern paper, my eyes fell on the words in the death column, "On January 26th, at his residence, Errity, Manor Cunningham, Rev. Alexander Rentoul, M.D., D.D." I remember nothing more till I reached the bereaved home.

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Perhaps it is well that we can never realise ourselves as orphaned until the fatal blow has fallen; yet could we do so, might not many a heartache be spared us when memory brings back the careless word, or indifferent tone, or disobedient act for which, in after years, we can find no place of repentance, though we seek it with tears?

Samuel Johnson stood all day bareheaded on the spot in Lichfield which his father's bookstall had occupied, as an act of penitence for having once refused to take his father's place there, but I cannot think this atonement obliterated the recollection of his youthful misdeed from the heart of the old man, "who had nothing of the bear about him but the skin."

. . . . .

The second and third years of my student life were spent in Belfast. Of these I have no specially satisfactory recollections, as I was an idle student, barely scraping through my sessional examinations, yet, let me boast, without either "cogs" or rejections!

My room-mate was a cousin some years ahead of me, and from him I had constant assurances that University honours were worth nothing, but that even were they of the very highest value, I could never take them. Indolence led

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me to readily accept the former dictum, and utter lack of self-confidence to believe the latter, and so, though filled with admiration and envy of the scholars and honours men, and regarding pass men as cumberers of the ground, I was never in the honours list until I reached the Degree examination; but if I idled at this time I can safely say I worked double time almost ever afterwards.



## CHAPTER V

### A FIRST EXPERIENCE OF CONTINENTAL LIFE

MY next step in search of education took me to Brussels and later to Berlin. Only those who have gone to the Continent with a definite object other than sight-seeing, without the power of speaking any language but their own, without either introductions or experience of foreign travel, and with a light purse, can conceive the horrible situation in which I found myself.

Somehow or other, however, I got settled down, and so bent was I on improving my knowledge of French that I left Brussels with little knowledge of the city or its people and went to Berlin, where I entered the University.

In order to do this it was necessary to attend to some formalities connected with my passport, and for this purpose I called at the Embassy.

So confused is one rendered by wrestling with a practically unknown language that I never realised I was on British soil, so to speak, and therefore began to formulate my request in very laboured and uncouth German, whereupon the

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young man whom I addressed said smilingly, "I think we probably both speak English better than German." The joy of hearing my mother tongue for the first time after many months induced a volubility on my part which was only excusable owing to the encouragement given me to narrate my experiences since arriving on the Continent, and as they seemed to me almost equal to those of Columbus I left little untold.

A bore has been defined as a person who persists in talking about himself when you want to talk about yourself, but my companion saved me from coming under this classification, for he evinced no desire for self-revelation and showed a flattering interest in what I deemed my adventures.

Although enjoying myself immensely, I occasionally suggested that I was occupying too much of the time of one whom I took to be a clerk in the Embassy. Not only, however, was I encouraged to remain, but my delightful fellow-countryman told me he would be pleased to see me if I would call again at Wilhelm Strasse, and I, not to be outdone in hospitality, cordially invited him to drop in on me in Alexandrinen Strasse !

Finally, on asking to have my passport taken to the Ambassador for signature, what was my

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dismay to find that it was Lord Loftus himself to whom I had been talking for a couple of hours as freely as I would have done to a fellow-student, and who had treated me in the friendliest way as one whom he was pleased to meet and anxious to help.

Had I known more of the world I should probably have been able to profit by the manifest kindness and charming condescension of the Ambassador, but I was so ashamed of my free-and-easy demeanour towards His Excellency, and of the invitation given him to visit me in my third-storey room, that I never entered Wilhelm Strasse where the Embassy was except at night, and never saw the Ambassador's carriage approach in the distance without turning into a side street.

It was told of Lord Loftus that when twitted by King William (afterwards Emperor of Germany) with the linguistic inferiority of his countrymen, he politely admitted the charge, and hastened with an appearance of childlike simplicity and candour to explain the cause—namely, that the English had not had the educational advantages of other European nations, as they had never had their capital city occupied by a foreign army!

Educated Germans, wishing to meet our



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linguistic deficiencies, sometimes resort to Latin, and students at the University frequently took me aback by suggesting that we should converse in that language.

It proved very useful in a case known to me where the daughter of a Scottish clergyman was about to marry a German officer. Neither knew the language of the other, and the entire correspondence regarding the marriage was conducted in Latin, though probably in such as would have grated sorely on Horace or Cicero.

The same language proved very useful to an Irishman, who on arriving at a railway station in France, and wishing to deposit his luggage there for a time, searched in vain in his "Phrase Book" for a means of conveying his desire to a porter.

Suddenly he remembered words familiar to every Catholic, as he rightly presumed the porter to be, so catching that worthy by the arm, he took him across the platform and pointing to his luggage said, "*Requiescat in pace,*" and then pointing to himself solemnly made the announcement, "*Resurgam.*" The intelligent foreigner smilingly nodded his entire comprehension of what was required.

Stories of travellers' difficulties are endless, but perhaps I may relate another of an English-

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man who knew no language but his own, and who had lost his way in Rome. In his perplexity it occurred to him to write the name of his hotel in large letters on his card, and hand it to the first benign-looking Italian whom he met. The Italian thus accosted turned, and, with the charming manners of his race, accompanied the perturbed Englishman for about twenty minutes in solemn silence, until they reached the hotel designated. In a transport of joy at finding himself once more on known ground the tourist poured out voluble thanks in the only language at his command, whereupon the Italian looked at him in amazement, and remarked in perfect English, "I thought you were deaf and dumb!"

I spent over a year in Germany. It is very usual now for people to proclaim that they had always known the Germans to be—unspeakable! At risk of being dubbed unpatriotic or dense, I will confess that I found nothing objectionable, and much that was admirable, in any of the Germans (and they were very many) with whom I associated intimately during my stay of over a year in their country.

They were louder of voice and ruder of manner than those of a similar class with us; their houses were differently furnished and their incomes were relatively much smaller than those

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pertaining to a similar rank at home. They practised economies, such as hiring out their private carriages or readily taking what we now call "paying guests," but in all fundamental qualities I recall nothing that could prove them inferior to other races, and have much to remember with appreciation and respect.

They were industrious, thrifty, practical and most eager for self-improvement. This last trait, admirable as it is, frequently roused my ire, for they were persistent in their efforts to practise their English with me on all occasions, but as I had gone to Germany at great inconvenience and cost to learn their language I had no intention of supplying gratis instruction to the Teuton in his own home.

My knowledge of the practical nature of the Germans caused me in after years to speak words of warning on many political platforms, for I knew well that war between them and us was as certain as to-morrow's sunrise. I knew well that the Germans were not bearing crushing taxation and submitting to long, irksome and expensive military training merely for the pleasure of listening to military music and looking at soldiers marching through the streets; and I also knew that a great and costly fleet of battle-ships was not being constructed for the purpose



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of forming a picture against the background of Heligoland, or, as seemed to be assumed, in order to guard the North Sea fishing smacks.

Statements to this effect were always highly unpopular and listened to with evident impatience, but when Lord Roberts was scouted and Lord Charles Beresford disregarded, it was not surprising that words of mine fell unheeded on ears that were deaf to their impassioned pleadings for a larger army and a stronger navy.

The Germany of my day (1869–1870) seems as far removed from the Germany of to-day as is the prosperous little Belgium of that time, from the ruined, blood-stained land which a brutalised foe has devastated.

In my opinion the transformation of the German race began on the day when William I of Prussia received the sword of Napoleon III of France.

Prussia entered on the war of 1870 with reluctance and grave anxiety as to the result, but the German thoroughness, which had France, and no doubt other neighbouring countries, mapped out in minutest detail, told in every particular; and the result was such a victory for the Germans as intoxicated the entire nation.

The difficulty of carrying a full cup is proverbial, and the evil effect of uncontrolled power

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is recognised by all observant people. In this as in other matters the appetite grows by what it feeds on, and the German lust for power became so great that a nation naturally thrifty and worldly wise consented to crushing taxation as the price to be willingly paid for the world dominance, which for fifty years was planned and prepared for. It has taken five years and as many nations to defeat this mad and wicked project, a fact which shows how well Germany had laid her lines.

That she has sunk to the lowest depths of degradation, morally as well as politically, is manifest to mankind. Had she, ere lowering her flag and sailing into British waters, sunk her fleet and found a sailor's grave for every man on board, she had done what I believe our British Navy would have done in similar circumstances.

To express the hope that Germany may rise from her degradation and may once more play a useful part in Europe is almost as unpopular at present as was the appeal from many political platforms: "Beware of Germany! Prepare for Germany."

That is, however, my hope, but it will never be fulfilled until Germany has learned the lessons which great tribulation often teaches, and unless,

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or until, in the fiery furnace to which she is now subjected the evil fostered by an arrogant and insolent sovereign, surrounded by arrogant and insolent counsellors and flatterers, is burnt out, and the race arises renewed and purified.

On my return from Germany I reaped the recompense for my weary hours of study, and was awarded by my University (Queen's) the Senior Scholarship in Modern Languages.

The form of congratulation on my success offered me by Professor Geissler, whose name indicates his nationality, shows the German attitude to education. His words were, "Since you desired this scholarship, I am very glad you have got it—but you know in Germany we would consider it a disgrace!"

To this professor a scholarship seemed like payment for doing that which should be alike a duty and a pleasure to every one; his view was that to associate learning with anything savouring of a reward tended to divert attention from the fact that the knowledge gained is in itself the great reward, and the only goal to which the attention of the student should be directed.

With this view, which at that time surprised me greatly, I am now in entire accord; but nothing in Germany seemed more strange to me than the determination of the people to familiarise



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themselves with subjects for which they never expected to have any practical use. Having been brought up in a country in which, as I once heard the headmaster of a boys' school say, "All knowledge has to be taught at the point of the bayonet," the love of learning in Germany never ceased to astonish me.

The whip of competition and prizes seemed unknown, and test by examination was held in no esteem. What may be called the leaving school certificate was, however, regarded as very important and of great service even to those intending to devote themselves to trade or agriculture. It served as a sort of testimonial, and was quite different from the ordinary testimonials given in this country which have been reduced to an absurdity, and are so wittily ridiculed by Lady Gregory in one of her plays.

More than a hundred years ago the science of pedagogy began to occupy the serious attention of German statesmen, and I do not think any one can doubt that the results have been most beneficial, for in few countries, if any, is there found a higher average of education, or of interest in intellectual matters. Notwithstanding, however, their excellent educational methods there must be some serious defect in the Teutonic mind, otherwise the world would not be suffer-

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ing as it is to-day, and Nietzsche would not have said with truth, "Wherever Germany extends her sway she ruins culture," and "The Germans are incapable of conceiving anything sublime."

Part of the University system which struck me as admirable was that of having "professors extraordinary" and *privatdocenten*, or assistants to the professors, affiliated to the university. A distinguished student applies to be made *privatdocent*, and if he passes certain tests he is nominated, and free to lecture in any of the rooms of the University which are not in use by the professors. He receives no salary and depends entirely on the fees from his students, but these must not be lower than those of the professor, and his lectures count as professors' lectures. The advantages are evident. The *privatdocent* has the benefit of the example of distinguished lecturers, and any professors who tend to grow negligent in their work are prevented from doing so by the fact that their classes would at once be deserted in favour of those of a more capable *privatdocent* or professor extraordinary. While I attended the Berlin University these teachers were both numerous and of great value.

Even the rule regarding text-books might with advantage be adopted in England. The masters



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in the public schools choose the books, but these must be approved of by the higher educational authorities, and once approved of, they may be used by all schools of the province. In this way the vexatious and expensive custom prevailing with us which requires parents so frequently to provide new and often worthless books for their children would be done away with.

The interest of the Germans in food and their capacity for disposing of it astonished me as it seems to have astonished all travellers since the days of Tacitus, and their beer-drinking powers were prodigious, but the envy spoken of by that writer of old and admitted by the Kaiser and von Bülow as a national vice did not obtrude itself on my notice, and if the germs of the brutality recently evinced existed in 1870, they were not observed by a youth in the early 'twenties, who was so animated by the desire to master the German language that nothing else appeared of any moment at the time. Goethe said of his countrymen, "I have often felt a bitter pain at the thought that the German people, so honourable as individuals, should be so miserable as a whole. A comparison of the German people with other peoples awakens a painful feeling which I try to escape in any way I can." It was as individuals and not as groups that I



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knew them, and as individuals I found them honourable and worthy of all respect.

On revisiting Germany thirty years after my student days, I found many proofs that old times were changed and old manners gone. The *Sièges Allée* in Berlin seemed very typical of the arrogant spirit and vulgar self-assertion prevalent everywhere. “*Verboten*” seemed writ large from one end of the empire to the other, and indicated a servile acquiescence in Prussian militarism. Manifestly, too, the Emperor had either hypnotised or terrorised the people, for in the most intimate and friendly converse the Germans shrank from answering even such innocent questions as “Is the Kaiser popular?” or “What effect has Bismarck’s policy had on that nation?” much as a child might shrink from discussion of the ghost or bogey or angel who loomed large on his horizon either as evil genius or protective power.

In my search after old friends I felt myself a veritable Rip van Winkle. Many of these friends bore names as common as John Smith or Tom Brown in England, and to search for them by means of directories seemed as hopeless as to find them because they had not a strawberry mark on their arm.

At last the happy thought struck me to send

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a post-card to every Wilhelm Strauss whose name appeared in the Berlin Directory, asking him, if he knew my name, to communicate with me; after some days I received an answer from one, and through him I was put in touch with those of my old friends who remained, and heard of the good or evil fortune that had been the lot of others; for their sakes I hope their sons may live to see the Germany of the past raised to life again, and their nation restored to sanity and a sense of truth and justice and national honour.

Before leaving the subject of Germany I cannot help commenting on the frequency with which those not much accustomed to travel regard all customs differing from those of their own country as foolish, vulgar, or even vicious. I often heard Germans express amazement at the impropriety of English women taking the initiative in greeting the other sex, and of English hostesses calmly occupying the sofa whilst their guest was seated elsewhere. That people (even well-bred) sit down at a hotel table and leave it without courteously addressing their neighbours, and that English linen is sent to the laundry once a week (thereby, as they thought, denoting the possession of only one change of raiment) seemed in their eyes impossible in a country pretending to be civilised. On the other

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hand, it is often said in Germany that English tourists know only one adjective, "Shocking!" So doubtless this word is too frequently and too freely applied by us to anything that seems strange or un-British, especially as the inexperienced tourist forgets that English is very well understood on the Continent, and that what is meant to be an uncomprehended aside is often taken as a personal and intentional rudeness.

Even at home too free criticism is not always wise, as the following incident will show.

Two English ladies on their homeward journey after a holiday spent in Ireland were loud in their denunciations of Bray, Greystones, etc., as places where "one met nobody but those Irish Roman Catholics." An old market woman sitting opposite to them preserved a face of ominous calm until she had reached her destination, when, stepping from the carriage, a basket on either arm, she turned round, and in a voice of disdainful indignation said, "Ladies, the next time yez is wantin' a holiday, 'A would advise yez to go to hell, for it's the only place where ye'll meet very few Irish and no Roman Catholics."



## CHAPTER VI

### MISTAKEN IDENTITY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES says every man is three men: the one he really is, the one he thinks he is, and the one other people think him. By this method of reasoning, I may claim to be half a dozen men.

On one occasion in Belgium I was mistaken for a harmless lunatic, but a still further humiliation awaited me.

On the homeward-bound steamer, I came across a young German starting for the United States. He knew no word of English, so, remembering my own pitiable condition when I arrived in his country almost equally ignorant of his language, I determined to aid him to the utmost of my power. I got his luggage picked out and put aboard the train, travelled with him to London, secured a cab, again looked after his belongings, accompanied him to a restaurant, and helped him in various other ways. To my surprise I saw him evince a growing reluctance to receive my well-meant attentions, and finally he declined entirely to fraternise longer with

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

me. After much pressure on my part for an explanation of his apparent mistrust of me, he confessed his belief that I was one of the London swell mob. I argued the matter out with him, and the reasons which he advanced for his view were so many and so convincing, that I have ever since looked askance at merely circumstantial evidence and have always given the accused the benefit of any doubts that arose.

This young German had evidently been reared in the belief, which is not always without foundation, that attentions offered to any one by absolute strangers are only the prelude to plundering him, and that London's chief industry was despoiling the unwary.

So firm is the grip of early ideas that I, who grew up in a very sparsely populated county, whose inhabitants believed that every crowd consisted more or less of pickpockets, never once passed through the division lobby of the House of Commons without finding myself unconsciously grasping my watch or my purse, and so effective were my precautions that, strange as it may seem, I was never once relieved of either !

At home as well as on the Continent I was the subject of many mistakes. One of these occurred in Scotland where I had been speaking for Mr. W. Whitelaw, M.P. for Perth, and in a

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railway carriage on my return journey I happened to mention in conversation with a fellow traveller the name of Mr. Whitelaw's residence, "Huntingtower," whereupon a man opposite looked at me with great interest and asked, "How long were you there?" "Four days," I replied. "Oh, you had bad luck," he said. "I stayed two years." This man had been butler there and thought I had succeeded to the onerous position, and, proving unfit for my duties, had been the victim of summary dismissal.

On another occasion after attending a function in the City at which Court dress was *de rigueur*, I was going on to the Earl of Derby's and drove with a friend as far as Charing Cross, intending to get a hansom there; this proved more difficult than I had expected, and I found myself receiving more attention from the bystanders than I at all relished. Eventually a cab turned up and I gave the address, "The Earl of Derby's, Charles Street." Soon my jehu pulled up with the information, "I'm sure you can't have the right address, for there's no public-house in Charles Street," evidently believing I was a comedian on my way to do a variety turn at some of the halls, but desirous first of some liquid refreshment.



## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Once again, when my *avoirdufois* was considerably less than in later years, I was present at a large gathering of notabilities in the Botanic Gardens, Belfast, and was flattered but embarrassed by finding myself such an object of interest that I was followed up and down the grounds, and often overheard the words, "Where is he?" "There he is!" Gratifying as this was to my vanity, it became at last so overpowering that I left the Gardens, and only discovered next day that the admiration and interest were not for myself but for Henry Irving, who was believed to be in Belfast at the time, and whom, in my younger days, I was often thought to resemble.

My next experience of misconception was less flattering, and occurred when travelling from Newcastle the morning after a great political gathering at which I had made what I have always considered my best speech, and possibly others who heard it may have so considered it, as it occupied only seven minutes in delivery. It was on the occasion of Mr. Balfour's visit to Newcastle in October 1890, when a banquet was given to about 1200 guests. To my surprise I had been asked to propose the toast, "The Houses of Parliament," and as I was the youngest and least important member present I felt it

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

incumbent on me to show my appreciation of the honour by being as brief as possible.

In the railway carriage the papers reporting the previous day's proceedings were being read and the speeches discussed freely, but with one accord mine was asserted to have been the speech of the evening. As I was the only person not joining in the conversation, one of the passengers turned to me and said, "What do you think, sir—wasn't Rentoul's the best speech of the lot?" Rather taken aback by the question, I thoughtlessly said, "Perhaps I am not a good judge, for I made it." The incredulity on the faces of all in the carriage showed me that on that occasion, the greatest of all mistakes had been made, for I was mistaken for a liar! And I continued my journey feeling that I was cutting a rather contemptible figure in the eyes of my fellow-travellers, who evidently found it beyond belief that one who claimed to have had on the previous evening a place of honour among the most prominent men of the day should be wending his way homewards in a third-class carriage.

## CHAPTER VII

### GALWAY : " THE CITY OF THE TRIBES "

IT is strange how often such trivial incidents as the lightly spoken word, the chance meeting with a stranger or old friend, the bent given in early years by some companion or book, determine the whole future course of our own life and perhaps that of many others.

Such an incident was the appearance in my home of almost the only light literature which my father—reared under the strictest Scottish views—would not have regarded as undesirable, if not actually dangerous. *Cassell's Family Paper* reached us weekly, and from the day when, in my early teens, I devoured the first chapter of J. F. Smith's "Substance and Shadow," the monotony of country life was relieved by the impatience with which I awaited each issue of the paper, and the excitement with which I followed the stirring events recorded in its pages.

Years afterwards, when time lay rather heavily on my hands, and I decided to take out some classes in law, the City of the Tribes attracted



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me, not because of its ancient history and splendid situation overlooking the Atlantic, not because of its beautiful college with its many excellent professors, but simply because in and around that ancient city the pictured friends of my childhood had played their stirring and romantic, or evil and designing, parts in that drama which, in my early boyhood, I had found so engrossing.

I went to Galway instead of back to Cork or Belfast because I desired to see in imagination Murlough House and Burna Castle, and visit the localities where Redmond O'Neil and Phelim Cassidy, General Talbot and Ulick Blake had played their varied parts.

It does not now seem strange to me that a work of fiction should have so gripped the imagination of a boy in his early teens, when I remember how long and fully such questions as : " Was the madness of Hamlet real or assumed ? " have been discussed by learned men and women ; and recall the fact that travellers have been so insistent in their demand to see the cell of Monte Cristo, that obliging authorities have broken a hole in the wall of the fortress in which the hero of Dumas' great masterpiece was incarcerated. Though the opening is above ground and not below, yet it answers the purpose, and visitors to the island are enabled by this pious

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fraud to have their blood curdled and their hearts wrung as they recall how Edmund Dantes dragged the body of the Abbé Faria from his cell and placed it on his own wretched pallet, and through this deception they are the better enabled to hear the cry of Dantes ring in their ears, as his gaolers fling him across the rocks into the "cemetery" of the Chateau d'If.

From the heaped-up cards lying on the tomb of Juliet it would seem as if no one can have ever passed through Verona without adding to the pile, even though (as when I paid her this homage) a new tomb was just being constructed for the immortal lovers; and Macaulay, we are told, had to turn aside into a by-path lest some one approaching should see him bathed in tears over the sorrows of—was it Hecuba or Antigone?

Need I apologise, then, for lamenting the early death of the lovely Ellen St. Clair, or admiring the fidelity to her orphan child of Kitty Cassidy and Phelim, her son, or need I hesitate to admit that to J. F. Smith, who created these fascinating and most real companions of my boyhood, I owe some of the best and happiest recollections of my youth?

This work of fiction in sending me to Galway affected vitally not only my own life but that of many members of my family, and was one of

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numerous cases known to me where important issues have turned on apparent trivialities or merest accidents.

No one could have known the President of Galway College, Dr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Moffett, without learning that, though it is the position which frequently lends dignity or importance to the man, there are men who add dignity and importance to any position, however distinguished, to which they may attain; whilst his scholarship and wonderful power of creating enthusiasm for his subjects in the minds of his students is talked of to this day by those who had the privilege of attending his classes.

Among the very few letters which I happen to have preserved, and which now after so many years I feel reluctant to destroy, is the following from Sir Thomas Moffett :—

*“ The Westminster Palace Hotel,*

*“ London, S.W.*

*“ 22nd July, 1897.*

“ MY DEAR MR. RENTOUL,

“ I was very much gratified by our opportune interview yesterday, and I assure you I was deeply touched by the warm interest you spontaneously expressed in the character and fair fame of our College. It is very discouraging



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to the staff of that College to read the charges that are perpetually reiterated with what Dr. Johnson would call 'the intrepidity of ignorance.' Indeed, the ignorance that prevails on this subject is quite surprising.

"I have shown in my annual reports (which, however, scarcely any one reads) that the success of its *alumni* in every walk of professional life, and in all departments of the public service at home and beyond the seas, has been conspicuous.

"The names of many men will occur to *you* at once.

"In the Report of the latest Commission of Inquiry into the working of the Queen's Colleges (which was appointed by Earl Spencer when Lord-Lieutenant) the Commissioners, having enumerated a list of the successful students, concluded with this expression of opinion :

"*"It is a record of which any College might justly feel proud."*

"I enclose an article from the *Irish Times* of last Saturday which I have only this moment seen.

"I feel sure you will kindly excuse this intrusion on your valuable time.

"Believe me to remain,

"Always yours most truly,

"THOMAS MOFFETT.

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“ P.S.—Every effort is made by disparagement and misrepresentation to keep young men from coming to this College, by the same persons who cast in our teeth the paucity of our students.”

“ T. M.”

The name of Professor D'Arcy Thompson is still held in affectionate remembrance by men so long done with College life that if they now revisited the scenes of their youth they would be regarded by the students of to-day as modern Rip van Winkles. Long after he had passed away, and when there was nothing to be gained by laying a wreath on his grave, I saw journalism at its best when Mr. T. P. O'Connor devoted a page or more of his brilliantly conducted paper to one of those literary etchings for which Mr. O'Connor has long been distinguished in the journalistic world, and the subject of the etching was his old teacher of Greek in Galway College.

Years after my time, when my youngest brother was a student there, “ D'Arcy,” as he was always affectionately called, once asked in his class, in reference to some Greek ceremonial or sacrifice, “ What is the only instance known of the female animal making more noise than the male ? ” My young brother, adopting apparently the fallacious view as to feminine talkative-

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ness, replied in all sincerity : " A woman ! " And, when recounting this afterwards with boyish shamefacedness, said, " It was the only time any of us ever saw D'Arcy laugh."

Dark days had come to " D'Arcy," as in one way or other they come sooner or later to most of us, and when he and another professor lost their promising young sons in a boating accident on one of the adjoining lakes, it became harder to present a smiling face to the world than it had been in days of yore.

Professor Campion, Professor of Law, paid me a most surprising compliment, when, after an examination, he sent for me and said, " I have scarcely ever taken the responsibility of advising a student about his future, but I have no hesitation in advising you to go on for the Bar." I replied that I had decided on the Church. Professor Campion's answer was, " God forbid that I should advise any one to choose a worldly calling in preference."

How little did he know that I had chosen that profession because it promised (in my case at any rate) to be very comfortable and very safe, and that, moreover, his suggestion filled me with as much consternation as I should feel to-day if I were suddenly called upon to construct an aeroplane or build a " U " boat.



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Long after my College days had ended, when some question regarding Irish University education was being discussed in the House of Commons, seven members, formerly Galway students, rose to reply. I stated that I believed no other College had ever at one time been so largely represented in the House, but it was pointed out that by Christ Church, Oxford, and also by Trinity College, Cambridge, this number had been exceeded.

No doubt this may have been so, but the honour of Galway is not lessened but rather increased if we remember how very small was Galway's average number of students, and that Christ Church and Trinity College had each an average of between three and four hundred, most of whom were of a rank to make Parliament easily accessible, whilst to the average Galway student the House of Commons seemed an almost impossible goal, and each man who reached it had to work his own way every inch of the road.

It was often rumoured that Galway College was to be abolished. To me such a step seemed nothing short of a calamity, and I fully endorsed the statement made by Sir Rowland Blennerhasset in 1905, "There is no institution in Ireland, and few, if any, in the United Kingdom,

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which, in proportion to numbers, has done anything like the work of Queen's College, Galway. At the present moment the work done in the Chemistry laboratory is very well known in Germany, and I trust that every one who takes an interest in, or is seriously anxious for, the good of the country, will try to prevent what the President has referred to [the contemplated extinction of the College], and what I would call assassination."

Happily a transformation took the place of the suggested "assassination," and Galway College is now University College, Galway, and I have no doubt doing, under its esteemed President Dr. Anderson, and under its new status and name, as useful work as in the past.

Large colleges, like large schools, are by many considered very desirable, but whatever their advantages may be, it seems to me that they labour under the serious disadvantage of preventing, by their very size, the valuable and close friendships which are easily formed when the circle is narrower; and, more regrettable still, of rendering it almost impossible for any special interest to be shown by the Professors in those to whom their personal acquaintance would be of incalculable value.

In the limited circle of Galway, friendships

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were formed which have withstood the trials of time and distance, and of those friends of my youth, there is none who stands higher in my esteem and regard than Michael Drummond, long since King's Counsel, Bencher of King's Inns, and Irish Judge. It was not only in the class-rooms and examination halls, but in the Debating Society, that he had a leading part; and perhaps nowhere could a better intellectual training ground have been found than in that Society, where many, who were afterwards to occupy high and important positions, expounded and defended their opinions with a brilliance and audacity for which Young Ireland is, and always has been, remarkable.

Another student whose entrance into a debate evoked equal interest was the late Frank Hugh O'Donnell.

On one occasion, when he spoke in the College Society of "Good Queen Bess," as "Elizabeth the Infamous," Dr. Moffett, whose interest in the students was not confined to the class-room, left the chair in indignant protest and for some time chaos reigned supreme.

A similar disturbance was imminent when a certain royal person was referred to ironically as "that respectable gentleman." Incidents such as these became the subject of questions in the



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House of Commons, a fact which evoked in us a feeling of pride somewhat similar to that indulged in by militant suffragettes or youthful Irish rebels who are sent to jail for breaking the Prime Minister's windows or resisting the police.

Frank O'Donnell entered Parliament in the Home Rule interest in 1874, and only left through discontent with the extreme courses of his colleagues. He was a recognised authority on foreign politics, and was of great service to our Imperial interests by his successful advocacy of the abolition of flogging in the Army. He was one of those men very rare in Ireland—a devout Catholic, but at times a bold critic and strong opponent of the Clergy of his Church.

His knowledge of men and books, and his political experience during very stormy times, combined with unusual gifts of language, made him a delightful and inspiring companion.

Thackeray tells of enduring a horrible nightmare, in which he saw himself chained to a rock and talked to death by Harriet Martineau and Lord Macaulay, but I could imagine no pleasanter exit from this world than to have been talked to death by Frank Hugh O'Donnell.

His younger brother, Mr. Charles James O'Donnell, was also one of Galway's *alumni*, and for many years served the Empire with

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distinction in India. On his retirement he was elected to represent a London constituency in Parliament.

Another old friend whom I frequently met in London is Dr. Thomas Miller Maguire. He came, like myself, a stranger to England, without friends or influence, but ere long had risen to the position of foremost Army "coach" in the Kingdom.

His special subject was English literature. When this was abolished from competitive courses by what he deemed official caprice, he turned to strategy and mastered that branch so thoroughly that, though a civilian and Doctor of Laws, he was taken again and again to Woolwich to lecture on the subject, and became a leading coach for the highest military promotion examinations, having as his pupils officers who have become our foremost generals in the late war of nations.

As political speakers we often came together, and his great fund of information was always at my disposal to draw on at any time.

For the success of his pupils he modestly claimed only partial credit, and when asked by a father the very usual question, "Can you get my son through for the Army?" Dr. Maguire was wont to say, "Well, sir, four things are

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necessary; brains, which only God can give; good teaching, which I can give; work, which your son must give; and money (and plenty of it), which you must give."

Needless to say, as this combination was frequently forthcoming, his pupils seldom failed to take the places to which they aspired.

Dr. Maguire is one of those unusually gifted men, of whom there are too few to be met with in the scholastic world, for how can it be expected that a profession which is the worst paid, the most arduous, and the least regarded, though among the most important of all, should, except in rare cases, attract men whose ability would carry them to the front rank in any of the more lucrative professions?

It is long since attention was called to this matter, for did not Roger Ascham, in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, point out that even very wise men are more anxious about the training of their horses than the training of their children. "They say nay in words"—he says—"but they do so in deed . . . for, to the one [the trainer] they will gladly give a stipend of two hundred crowns by year, and loth to offer the other [the teacher] two hundred shillings . . . therefore, in the end, they find more pleasure in a horse than comfort in their children."



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An occasional man goes into the teaching profession not by drift or because nothing else seems open to him, but because he is impelled towards it by a power stronger than self-interest, and it is among these occasional men that the Arnolds and Thrings are found, as well as those who, though unknown to fame, leave an indelible mark on the generation for which they have worked.

An Irishman who sought the position of master in a school was asked, "What can you teach?" and surprised his interlocutor by answering, "Give me half an hour's start of the class and I can teach anything."

From a born teacher such as Dr. Maguire some such answer would be neither foolish nor arrogant, for the power of imparting to others an appreciation of a subject, and a desire to master it, is much rarer, and of much more value than profound erudition.

Amongst other old friends of student days who attained to distinguished positions in the educational world are Sir John McFarland, LL.D., Master of Ormond College, Melbourne, and Vice-Chancellor of the Melbourne University, Professor Rentoul, D.D., of Ormond College, and Dr. W. H. Maxwell, head of the educational system of New York.

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Other Galway students of my time who came to England and brought distinction to their country and College are Robert A. M'Call, K.C., Attorney-General of the Duchy of Lancaster, Robert McSwiney, Bencher of the Inner Temple, and James Mulligan, K.C., Bencher of Gray's Inn and Judge of the Norfolk County Court, all of whom through their own ability made their way at the English Bar, where Irishmen, from Earl Cairns and Lord Russell downwards, have ever received a kindly welcome.

My interest in my old College tempts me to draw up a lengthy list of those who went from it to occupy outstanding positions in many parts of the Empire, but it is enough to mention such men as Lord MacDonnell, who stands pre-eminent for his services in India; Sir Raymond West, K.C.I.E., Judge of the High Court of Bombay; Michael McAuliffe, Divisional Judge of the Punjab; Bernard Norton, Judge of the Supreme Court of British Guiana, and Sir Henry Blake, Governor of Ceylon, to show the distinguished positions to which students of this small and isolated College attained abroad, while at home a large proportion won distinction in every walk of life.

At the Bar, the Rt. Hon. Lord Atkinson, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Justice Munro, the Rt. Hon. Mr.

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Justice Gordon, and many others have reached the foremost places; Sir Andrew Reed, K.C.B., C.V.O., became Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary; Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., now "Father of the House of Commons," stood high in the journalistic world at a very early age, and in the medical profession Sir William Thompson, Sir Peter Freyer, and Sir Thornley Stoker are amongst those who occupy the very highest rank in this arduous calling.

Scores of others, less known, perhaps, but no less useful and honourable, are to-day solicitors, barristers, clergymen, teachers, doctors and engineers in various parts of the world.

I cannot leave the subject of Galway without parodying the advice given to the complaining tourists by the Dublin basket-woman and saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the next time you want a holiday, take it in the West of Ireland, for if you have never been there you don't know what a holiday is."

Where else can be found the charm of travel among a foreign people without the trouble of a foreign language? Where but in western Donegal would one meet a young woman weighed down by a "creel" of peats on her back, and who yet had a spirit so cheerful that when I said to her "You have lovely air here," would reply with a



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happy smile, "Aye, thank God, it couldn't be bate."

Where but in Achill Island could one find a woman returning from a wealthy English town, where her husband had found well-paid work, because it was intolerable to her that the water had to be paid for, coals and firewood bought, the children conducted to and from school, and no passer-by who would ever "bid one the time o'day"; whereas in Achill stranger greets stranger graciously, water is everywhere free as air, peat and bog fir, so far superior on the cottage hearth to "them dhirty coals," lie everywhere for the taking, and one has but to open the door and say to "the childher," "Away wid ye," and they need never be thought of again until school is over and they return like hungry young hawks to devour the scanty meal provided for them?

Where but in the south, with its enervating climate, would one find a stalwart young man leaning lazily against a broken wall, who, on being told if he came to Belfast he could earn £4 a week, would answer, "And what the devil would I do with £4 a week!"? Where are cliffs so imposing, sands so silvery, water so blue and waves so majestic as along the coast of western Ireland? Truly to the Englishman it is a foreign country in more ways than one, and

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therefore I would again say, "You don't know what a holiday is until you take one there."

Stopford Brooke—an Irishman whose life-work was done in England—refers in his introduction to *A Treasury of Irish Poetry* to "That appealing emotion which lives like a soul in the natural scenery of Ireland and makes it, at least for an Irishman, transcend all other scenery by depth and range of sentiment."

A lady of my acquaintance, who is neither young nor emotional, told me that as she walked along a lonely road in Connemara, she was surprised to find the tears coursing down her cheeks.

I tried to probe the psychological cause, but could only evoke the answer, "I don't know; it was all so strange—so unlike anything I ever saw before; it was like—Paderewski's playing, or like Patti's singing of 'Home Sweet Home.'"

The country is desolate to a degree, as if Cromwell had swept a race out of existence, leaving only a few ghosts to take up their abode in this enchanting wilderness. Stone crosses stand here and there the origin and history of which are unknown; ruins of what once were monasteries or cathedrals speak of a cultivated people long since vanished; the tombs of Carrowmore are still visited by antiquarians; and archeologists come from all parts of the world to see in the

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Dun Aengus and other forts of the Aran Isles proof of a virile fighting race, whose history is written only in these stones. Therefore to the man of science, to those to whom things of the long dead past make a special appeal, as well as to the lover of Nature at its wildest and grandest, I can imagine no place so rich in interest and varied charm as that now sorrowful land which was once known as the “Home of the scholar” and the “Home of the saint.”



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION

HAVING taken my degree, the next turning point for me—the most important for any one—was the choice of a profession. I should have preferred the scholastic to any other, but the only subject in which I had then gained University distinction was Modern Languages, and in the early 'seventies these were regarded by the educational world with a disdain only second to that accorded to Science. Wiser ideas now prevail, and were I starting life to-day I should have no difficulty in finding an entrance into the educational ranks and spending my life as I should be glad it had been spent.

Teachers are like poets, born, not made, and I had the inestimable privilege of being under a few whose memory must be ever green to all who shared my advantage.

Amongst those of my College days—Professor Richard Smith, afterwards Liberal M.P. for County Derry, stood pre-eminent. He was Professor of Oriental Literature and Hermeneutics in Magee College, Derry, and a preacher and

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lecturer of the first order. Finish and style marked everything he did or said, and I venture to say no student ever passed through his classes without receiving a certain impress from him which never wholly passed away.

Unfortunately he was lame, and never enjoyed robust health. Once he overheard a lady in answer to the inquiry "Who is that?" reply, "That is Smith, the lame preacher."

Stopping for a moment, and raising his hat, he said: "Excuse me, madam, you make a mistake, I am lame Smith, the preacher," and certainly, except for that defect, there was nothing lame about Professor Richard Smith.

In pulpit eloquence he had, in my opinion, only one equal in Ireland, Rev. Dr. Lynd, who had the same insight into the higher things of life—the same perfection of manner and grace of gesture, the same power of choosing the right word, and a voice and delivery which made even the common-places of every-day experience delightful to listen to. He became the recognised orator of the General Assembly, so that when anything requiring tact and taste, judgment and sympathy, was to be done, there seemed in the eyes of his colleagues but one man to do it, Dr. Lynd of May Street, Belfast.

Not having, as I have stated, the "open

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sesamé” to an educational career, a classical or mathematical degree, I bethought myself of other paths.

The medical profession, though one of the noblest, did not attract me—nor did the Army or Navy, even had I had the private means requisite for these. There seemed, then, to remain but the Bar and the Church. The former I never considered, as I believed success at the Bar to depend entirely on exceptional eloquence, and until then I had spoken only once or twice in public, and on each occasion had scored a signal failure.

I finally decided on the Church. To that profession I never had any “call,” and I was eminently unfitted for it by every quality, good or bad, which I possessed.

The knowledge that my father would have been glad for me to carry on his work, the fact that his pulpit was still vacant and the congregation waiting for me to become ordained, the advice of friends, the lack of other openings, and, for me at any rate, the safety and ease of the clerical profession, led to my decision.

I took one Divinity session in Magee College, Derry. That College was too near my home for me to be a diligent student, and also boating on the Foyle became an irresistible attraction to



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many of us, so we were quite ready to accept Wordsworth as our prophet, at least in so far as he said :—

“ Up, up, my friends and quit your books  
Or surely you'll grow double ;  
Up, up, my friends and clear your looks.  
Why all this toil and trouble ? ”

The higher education of women was at that time as exciting a topic as Woman's Suffrage became some decades later. Pioneers in the movement were Mrs. Byers, founder and first Principal of Victoria College, Belfast (on whom Dublin University afterwards conferred the degree of LL.D.), and Miss Isabella S. M. Tod. I was an early convert to the movement. Of course it was covered with the ridicule which is accorded to every new idea, and “ the superstitious dis-relish for change which is always present ” was evinced in most quarters. Grotesque pictures were drawn of goggle-eyed girls with cropped hair, assertive voices and masculine attire, who, should they ever enter the ranks of matrimony, would be so engrossed by the differential calculus or the Greek accent, that their long-suffering husbands would either have to fast or raid the pantry in search of some broken “ vittles ” with which to allay their hunger, and, should they ever become mothers of unfortunate children, it was

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assumed that the career of the latter would be inevitably cut short by the boiling kettle or blazing lamp which was sure to fall upon them whilst their mothers were arguing with University professors over the differences involved in *ὁμός* and *ὁμοίς*, or the effect of mind on matter or matter on mind. It never seemed to occur to anyone that girls might not be filled with any greater passion for study than their brothers, or that a little education might render them no less fit to discharge their duties in after life.

Nothing daunted, however, I took up the cause of the weaker vessel and went in whole-heartedly for the higher education of women.

Of course I did not wish them to reach our masculine pinnacle of erudition, but merely desired to have them educated up to the point of being intelligent and interested listeners to the words of wisdom of their male friends !

At that time few, if any, believed women could stand the strain of a full University course either mentally or physically, and probably no one would have been more surprised than the average woman of that day, to learn that high places at the most difficult University examinations would often be taken by girls barely out of their teens. I propounded my views in a paper entitled "Female Education," read at a meeting of the

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College Literary Society, but, like all pioneers or followers in any new crusade, I offended everybody and pleased nobody.

Some years later, when a young lady, as all better-class girls of that day were described, took the degree of LL.D. shortly after it had been conferred on me, I felt as aggrieved as the newly created knight feels when a neighbour, whom he regards as by no means his equal, has a similar honour conferred on him; and recalling my early advocacy of higher education for women, I was reminded of the little girl who joined in a public prayer for rain, but when it fell in too great abundance and wrought havoc in her little garden plot, plaintively remarked: "This is what comes of interfering with what you don't understand."

My Divinity course was completed in the Assembly's College, Belfast.

Although I had not the slightest doubt in regard to the fundamentals of the Christian religion, dogma and theological speculations possessed no interest for me either then or at any later period, and belief in the Fatherhood of God, involving as it does the brotherhood of man, has long seemed to me the highest form of creed.

. . . . .



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I have already referred to the circumstances which led to my choosing—or rather drifting into—the clerical profession.

After completing the long course of preparation required by the General Assembly I was ordained fourth in succession in the Church of Second Ray, of which my great-grandfather, Rev. Robert Reed, was first minister.

The present building was due to the exertions of my father and the liberality of the people. With wonderful foresight he had its seating capacity limited to 700, though the congregation in attendance numbered at least 1000; but he foresaw a population bound to dwindle by at least a half. The terrible famine of 1846 had started the stream of emigration. Hard times continued, marriages became less common, emigration increased rapidly, and he realised that the cheap import of food stuffs must vitally affect an agricultural country like Ireland. To such an extent has this been the case that farms of from fifty to sixty acres, which in the last century supported a whole family in a more or less meagre way, became absorbed into large farms of from 200 to 250 acres, and in the church in which during my boyhood the people took it in turn to stand and sit alternately during the services (then never shorter than three hours) there could

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now be allotted almost an entire pew to each individual.

What would the church-goers of to-day think of Communion Services, lasting, as they did in my grandfather's time, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. or later, or even of those in the days of his successor which began at 10 a.m. and were never over before four in the afternoon?

A diminished congregation naturally caused these services to grow shorter, and during my ministry they never exceeded five hours in length!

The incredible patience displayed in the pew was no doubt due to the fact that dogma, which was then regarded as of vital importance in spiritual life, was elaborately discussed in the pulpit. The statement—"dogma is dead and buried"—which was made some years ago in the General Assembly by a Moderator (Rev. Dr. M'Kean), would have seemed fifty years ago almost as daring a blasphemy as to say the Ten Commandments are out of date.

It must also be remembered that books were few, and newspapers and magazines almost unknown in country districts, so the sermons on Sunday formed very largely the intellectual food of the parish for the ensuing week. A short sermon would, therefore, have been considered a

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fraud on the people and entirely discreditable to the preacher.

It was not in Ulster only that this was the case, for Canon Sheehan of Doneraile says the Easter sermon was expected to occupy at least an hour, and the curate who could preach for two hours was immortalised !

Apparently the English do not share this taste, for I have often heard sermons of more than ten minutes' length spoken of in England as an intolerable grievance to the audience.

. . . . .

From the members of my Church in County Donegal I received unbounded kindness. I never needed to say to them :

“ Think of me as better than my best,”

for this was ever their attitude towards me—and no matter what my shortcomings—they always seemed to think my father's son could do no wrong.

If those who still survive retain as happy and grateful recollections of me as I retain of them, my ten years at Manor Cunningham were not spent wholly in vain.

A return to my native parish has become in recent years a very mixed pleasure.

R. L. Stevenson tells of an aged lady who



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visited a loan collection of Raeburn's portraits, and seeing again the familiar faces of friends long dead, felt as if she was in an assembly of ghosts. When I revisit my native parish and look for the old familiar faces of earlier days, and find them not, whilst pews and platform and building remain unchanged, I am reminded of the curator of a picture-gallery, who had seen many generations of visitors come and go, and who, when one of them remarked to him in regard to the passers by, "You live in a world of shadows," answered: "No, it is the pictures that are the realities, the men and women are the shadows."

Some of the families known to me have died out, but happily the majority have left representatives, who bear their names worthily, not only in various parts of the United Kingdom, but in Canada, Australasia, India and the United States.

During those ten years my closest friends were Rev. Dr. W. D. Wallace, Ramelton, who remains one of the most respected members of the General Assembly, and Rev. Hugh McCullagh, of Milford, who was nominated to a parish in the Church of Scotland, and is now, like so many of my contemporaries, on the retired list. I wonder does he remember how often we sat far into the small

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hours of the morning discussing problems eternally interesting, but eternally insoluble !

One of our difficulties in regard to a future life was the limited number of our acquaintances whom we thought worthy of being perpetuated, but the discussion terminated finally in uncontrolled laughter when we found we had practically reduced the number to our two selves ! And in our heart of hearts, I think each of us had doubts as to the claims of the other to immortality !

It is, I think, John Stuart Mill who includes among popular fallacies the idea that clergymen's families turn out badly. My experience coincides with that of John Stuart Mill.

As every undersized man is said to have a list of all the little men from Bildad the Shuhite to General Tom Thumb who, in spite of diminutive stature, have won name and fame, perhaps, I have taken special note of those sons of the Manse who have achieved distinction, from Dr. Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of York and almost head of the Church of England, to Mr. Bonar Law, almost head of the British Parliament ; and it is a matter of personal knowledge with me that clergymen's children are exceptionally successful. The reasons, I think, are not far to seek. Judicious upbringing, the necessity for self-exertion, and such a very limited parental income as makes

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plain living inevitable—even though high thinking may not be invariable—are a very good preparation for life's battle.

My colleagues at Manor Cunningham were Rev. Dr. M'Morris and Rev. James Irwin, whose names are still held in affectionate remembrance by their congregations and by many outside these. My other co-worker during those ten years was Father (now Canon) Sweeny, who came after seven years' study in Rome to that remote parish to live the lonely life inevitable for an Irish Catholic priest in a district in which there was for him practically no society, for his congregation consisted almost entirely of the very poor, and unfortunately in the North of Ireland those of different creed have not yet learned to associate with any degree of intimacy.

To me there now seems great pathos in such a solitary existence, but it had, no doubt, compensations in the devoted attachment of the people to whom he ministered.

Although I was afterwards a member of the English Bar, and of two such great representative assemblies as the London County Council and the House of Commons, it was always my belief that in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (as well as in the London Presbytery) there were men of as marked ability and striking personality



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and high purpose as were to be found in any of those more famous bodies, and it has always been a very great pleasure to me to remain in touch with, and retain the friendship of, those among whom I spent the early years of my professional life.

After ten years' work in Ireland various causes led to my coming to England—the country of my future wife, and I again bethought myself of the teaching profession, but there was no demand for all that I could offer in the educational market—Law and Modern Languages.

The honour of being unanimously invited to the pastorate of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Woolwich, led me once again at one of life's turning-points to follow the line of least resistance.

My experience there was similar to that which I enjoyed in my native parish. Kindness and consideration were shown me by every one, and in this congregation, whose members were almost exclusively Scotch and Radical, I found a tolerance and breadth of outlook, combined with a sincerity of purpose, which are far from universal.

There also I had proof of the folly of attributing certain characteristics to a nation, and assuming all of that nationality to be possessed of those characteristics.

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Every one has heard the “ bang went saxpence ” story, and been told that the Scotchman is one who keeps the Sabbath—and every thing else he can lay hands on !

After most intimate experience of the Scotch in Woolwich and an extensive, though less intimate, knowledge of them in their own country, it is my conviction that no more generous or hospitable race exists.

I can only attribute the widespread idea of Scottish “ nearness ” to the fact that in that country the vices of wastefulness, extravagance and love of display are not nearly so common as in either England or Ireland, and self-denial in matters of personal outlay probably accounts for the Scotch being able to be exceptionally generous to every cause and every person having any claim on them. These characteristics are well illustrated by an incident related by Dr. Guthrie, the great Edinburgh preacher.

One of the many beneficent works in which he took part—or which he originated—was that of getting up a fund to provide manses for the Clergy of his Church—a fund which in twelve months reached the phenomenal sum of £116,000. When dining with Captain Burnett one evening before a “ begging ” meeting, he heard his host (from whom he expected £50) say, “ Too bad,

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too bad ! I've lost my glasses, and I paid fourteen shillings for them in London last year, and now the money's lost ; too bad, too bad ! ” As he referred more than once to this vexatious occurrence, Dr. Guthrie's hopes of the £50 fell below zero, and his surprise and delight were proportionately great when Captain Burnett, after the meeting, handed him a cheque for £200.

It is told that a Scotch Presbyterian who found his way accidentally into the Temple Church, but was observed to leave before the service had advanced very far, was asked why he had not remained to the end, and replied : “ As I went into the church a man handed me a programme, but when I looked at it and saw ‘ Collect, Collect, Collect ’ all the way through, I thought it was no place for me, for though I'm quite willing to give something to one collection, I don't want to be ‘ collected ’ half a dozen times in the course of an hour or two.”

I often told this story, but never, I hope, without adding that a Scotchman is second to none in paying all he ought to pay—and sometimes more.

Another trait attributed to Scotchmen is well illustrated by the account of the man who was heard shouting “ Fresh Scotch shrimps caught off Yarmouth ! ”—and when asked how he knew



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they were Scotch when caught off Yarmouth, replied : “ See how they stick together ! ”

This story was told by me in a lecture on Scotland, and seemed to catch the journalistic fancy, for papers repeating it continued for many years to be posted to me from all over the English-speaking world.

I gained equal notoriety through a lecture entitled “ The Fourteen Mistakes of Life.” The title was not original, for I believe I saw it somewhere as a headline, and the idea occurred to me to make it the basis for a lecture. Until the present time papers reach me from thousands of miles away, containing paragraphs headed “ A Judge’s Fourteen Mistakes in Life,” so they are evidently all set down to my personal account.

. . . . .

I greatly appreciated the honour of being elected along with Colonel Hughes, M.P., to represent Woolwich on the London County Council and greatly enjoyed the work and the intercourse with the men of varied rank and interests who formed that important elected assembly.

Two women were returned as members, Miss Cobden and Miss Conn, and were, I believe, the first women to act on County Councils.

Lord Rosebery was elected Chairman, and apart altogether from his social position, no better

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selection could have been made, for he fulfilled his arduous duties in a manner that commanded universal appreciation.

I always thought nature intended him for a Conservative, but as we are informed in opera that—

“Every boy and every girl that’s born into this world alive,  
Is either a little Liber-*al*, or else a little Conserva-*tive*.”

Lord Rosebery apparently could not escape the fate which placed him in the Liberal camp, nor could his own abilities have permitted him to escape the duties of Chairman of the first London County Council, and later of Prime Minister of England.

That the following anecdote should be coupled with his name will not seem strange to anyone who has had the pleasure of his acquaintance and evidence of his tact and kindly feeling.

The story runs that at a certain political function, where ices formed part of the refreshments, a countryman, not accustomed to such luxuries, helped himself liberally. The wholly unexpected chill startled him, and turning to a bystander, who happened to be Lord Rosebery, he exclaimed in amazement: “The puddin’s froze !”

His lordship partook of an ice very tentatively, as if experimenting with some strange food, and

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replied, "By Jove, so it is!" and thus saved the countryman from the consciousness of what he doubtless would have considered the great ignominy of a social blunder.

. . . . .

As I have already said, the Church was not the profession I ought to have entered, not because I was too good for it, but because it was so vastly too good for me, and feeling this more strongly year by year I decided to give it up, and was called to the Bar.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As the writer tended always to underrate his own work and influence, it is only right to say that not only was he an eloquent preacher and attentive pastor, but by conducting weekly classes in various subjects, and arranging for lectures, social meetings, etc., he did all in his power to awaken the interest of the young people of the district in matters outside their daily occupations.

These efforts on his part are still remembered and spoken of with great appreciation by many to whom their youth is but a memory, and are referred to in the "Minute" entered in the records of Second Ray Church from which the following extract is taken:—

"Although thirty-eight years have elapsed since he [Dr. Rentoul] resigned his charge here, and left this district, the memory of his decade of service is still fresh, and the influence of his strong and winsome personality is still felt.

"His eloquence as a preacher, his interest in the education and development of the young people, his efforts in the cause of temperance, and his broad outlook on life have left an indelible mark on the congregation. His brilliant career and life of usefulness we have followed with gratification, and his occasional re-appearances in our midst have always



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been a source of pleasure, and we feel a sense of personal loss that we shall see his face no more.”

The Clerk of the Irish General Assembly, Rev. Dr. Lowe, writing on the occasion of his death, said :—

“ He rendered good service to our Church as a minister for about ten years, and all who knew him had the greatest admiration for his commanding ability and his many attractive and outstanding gifts.

“ We followed his remarkable career with sincere appreciation, and were greatly gratified by every honour to which he attained.”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BAR

IT seems as if from my earliest years the Law Courts had an irresistible attraction for me, for, at my own urgent request, I made my first appearance in one when only nine years of age.

A serious charge was made against a member of a reckless and rather dreaded family in my native parish. It was talked of by every one, and produced much excitement in the village, and several people were summoned as witnesses. When I heard this and saw the formal documents, I betook myself at once to the police barrack, complained to the sergeant that others had been summoned who knew little about the matter in comparison with me, and assured him that he would find me a most important witness !

I have often heard men say, "This was the proudest moment of my life," but I verily believe my proudest moment was when I saw a constable approach our house, and knew he had in his pocket a document similar to those I had seen delivered to others and bearing a command to myself, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen !

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My father was much concerned, and did all in his power to prevent my appearing in this case, urging that I was only a child, so young that no heed could be paid to my evidence; but when the constable, with a knowledge of parental weakness, plausibly assured him that I was a lad of "most unusual intelligence," what could any foolishly fond parent do but acquiesce in the law's demand?

Some one had informed me that to kiss the Book was to repudiate the faith of my fathers, therefore when the magistrate decided that I was fit to be sworn, and the Book was given to me, I said, "I am a Presbyterian and can only swear with the uplifted hand," thus making my first public declaration of the faith that was in me!

My next experience in a law-court taught me a very useful lesson many years later. I had to give evidence as witness for the prosecution in the case of a dishonest man-servant, and the lawyer for the defence subjected me to a cross-examination so unfair and merciless that the experience was most helpful to me in after life.

It taught me, firstly, that brow-beating witnesses—who are often placed in a most painful position and frequently desire to tell only the truth—is wholly inexcusable; and secondly, the



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attitude of the judge clearly proved to me that such brow-beating is far from meeting with approval from the Bench.

Brutal cross-examination is, as a general rule, due to one of two causes—either the knowledge that a client desires revenge as well as a verdict in his favour; or to the fact that it seems very tame, in a losing case, to have nothing to say.

A little Irish jockey who lost the race, but came in with his spurs dripping red, was heard to say with conscious pride, “I gave them blood for their money anyway!” and the lawyer who has no case, or who has thrown away any case he had, may be animated by some such feeling.

The Bar, in spite of its risks, is, and for long has been, perhaps, the most attractive of professions to many young men, and it is deplorable that such a large percentage of those who have the courage to enter the lists should fall short of success, owing to circumstances altogether outside their own personality. Of these circumstances, overcrowding is one which more than any other renders the struggle hard and often hopeless; it is estimated that there is work for about one man in ten at the English Bar, and that is why the Temple is the stage of so many real tragedies.

In my early student days I imagined eloquence

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to be the high road to legal success; at a later time I thought knowledge of law and hard work would be sufficient to secure it; it was only at a later period still that I realised to what an extent barristers are dependent on the goodwill of the other branch of the legal profession, and that without the support of solicitors, or the influence which could secure it, success at the Bar is little short of a miracle.

When I was called in 1884 I had practically no acquaintance with solicitors in England, and had no influence in this country; but luck, if I may call it so, helped me on. Many of the cases early entrusted to me I owed to a solicitor's clerk (a most ardent Radical, as many brilliant youths are) who was present at a political meeting at which I spoke, and was so impressed by the manner in which I dealt with his cherished theories that he persuaded his chief I could equally refute the arguments of any legal opponent in any case whatever;—a flattering, if baseless, belief, which led to my getting from that time a very liberal share of that firm's work, and to the head of the firm becoming one of my most esteemed friends.

This accidental circumstance proved much to my benefit, but in another case I lost (also through the influence of a clerk) the work of a still more

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important firm from which I received more briefs and larger fees, promptly paid, than I ever received from any other quarter. On this occasion I was briefed in an accident case for the plaintiff. The firm above referred to had charge of the defence and had engaged an eminent Q.C. (afterwards a High Court Judge), who made a most touching appeal to the jury on the ground of the poverty of his client and his absolute inability to pay damages, or indeed even meet costs, without bringing himself and his family to ruin.

In my reply I showed that this pathetic appeal was quite beside the mark, as the defendant was fully insured, and the real defendant was an Insurance Company well able to pay the damages claimed and which were awarded to my client by the jury.

When leaving the Court I was surprised by the managing clerk of the solicitor for the defence coming to me and saying rudely, "You will never get a brief from us again!" and I never did; but I do not suppose the heads of the firm knew that their work was being purposely and systematically kept from me because I had not betrayed my client's interests in order to secure a continuance of their business.

I was at that time a Queen's Counsel and



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Member of Parliament, yet an impertinent, and shall I say unprincipled, clerk was able to do me a serious professional injury,—a fact which indicates another of the risks which beset a barrister until he has reached a position in which such experiences are of no consequence whatever.

As junior counsel I acted in many cases with such distinguished men as Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Chief Justice) and Mr. Henn Collins (afterwards Master of the Rolls), etc., etc.

I can only claim a professional acquaintance with the last two, but I enjoyed the honour and very great pleasure of the friendship of Sir Edward Clarke, one of the most eminent men at the Bar.

On one occasion I learned that a prisoner whom I had to defend on a very serious charge had been a schoolfellow of Sir Edward's. I called on the latter to ask his advice on behalf of my client; but far from being satisfied with merely advising, Sir Edward came himself to Court without fee, and never left during the whole four days of the trial.

His clerk was almost reduced to tears when telling me of the briefs he had had to return during that time.

On another occasion I was junior to Sir Edward in a long and difficult case which had excited

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considerable public notice, and when the real work had been done, and the case was, to all intents and purposes, successfully completed, and there remained but the final address to the jury to be made, Sir Edward said to me, "I don't propose to come into Court again, as it will be useful to you to make the speech to the jury in a case of so much notoriety."

Only those who are intimately acquainted with the Bar will understand the unusual nature of the consideration thus shown by a great leader for a struggling junior.

I fear I badly repaid these and other kindnesses, for once, on a public occasion, I told of a few of the many instances known to me of exceptional generosity on Sir Edward's part; with the consequence, as I learned afterwards, that he was deluged with letters asking him for various sums, from three figures downwards, and was looked to for help by all sorts of people who evidently had not taken to heart the lessons of "Self Help," or learned that God helps those who help themselves.

As already stated, my acquaintance with Lord Russell had been only professional, and therefore I felt all the more grateful to him for the friendly interest manifested in me when he sent for me after I had applied for silk, and put before me in

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the kindest way the risk incurred in such a step, asking me could I live if I practically never got a brief as a Q.C., as he had known this to happen to many who had been in excellent junior practice. I was tempted to take the risk, great as it was, in spite of this friendly warning, owing, probably, to the fact that so very few had at that time taken silk in so short a period.

A severe illness, which necessitated my giving up all work for many months soon after being called to the Inner Bar, might have entirely destroyed my practice, but, though damaging it very considerably, had fortunately not so serious a result. Like most lawyers, I had, from time to time, cases which presented unusual features; the following is one I remember with interest.

Shortly after I had taken silk, an acquaintance called one day at my chambers, and in the course of conversation said that he had a "right of way" case which he wanted me to take for him. I explained that he must first of all consult a solicitor, who would in turn brief a junior barrister, and although my friend looked on this as very absurd, he got from me the address of a firm near the Temple—Messrs. Hamlin, Grammer and Hamlin. I told him to see Mr. Hamlin and follow his advice, and the advice was that he had no case and no possibility of success. Mr. McIlroy



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expressed himself as much obliged, but said he would go on all the same. The case was then sent for opinion to one of the best lawyers at the Junior Bar, and his opinion coincided with that of the solicitor, that success was quite impossible. In spite of this, Mr. McIlroy persisted in his determination. I therefore saw Mr. Hamlin, and told him that our client must not be allowed, through ignorance of the law, to drift into costly and hopeless litigation, and that we must therefore have a conference in his presence. This was done, and all three tried to prove to him that he had no case. Our best efforts, however, failed to affect his decision, and the case went to court. Among the barristers present were Mr. Birrell, Q.C., and Mr. Astbury, Q.C., soon afterwards High Court Judge, Chancery Division, and in talking with me, one of them asked me if I knew why I was briefed; I replied that it was due possibly to the fact that I was a friend of the plaintiff. "Not at all," was the reply, "it is because no Chancery barrister could possibly utter the nonsense you will have to resort to in order even to open the case." But, to our surprise and that of every one except the optimistic litigant, I opened it and closed it and got a judgment in my favour so strong and emphatic that the other side did not dare to

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appeal. The judge was that most able of Chancery judges, Mr. Justice Byrne, who in this case allowed equity to override the clear letter of the law.

At the close of the proceedings, the remark of our client was, "Gentlemen, you are three very honest men, which is the reason, I suppose, why you are no lawyers!" Mr. McIlroy, no doubt, thought this witty, and so it was, and he was well entitled to be witty under the circumstances.

The law on "right of way" is, however, still exactly as we said it was then, but in writings laying it down, I have observed the footnote, "But see the McIlroy case."

Among some celebrated cases in which I was engaged as leader was that of Hearn and Winnefrith, which settled the law as to new trials: the Attorney-General *v.* Wright, which is the leading case on the doctrine of foreshore rights:—and the Russell case in the House of Lords, which fixed the limit of the doctrine of legal cruelty for a long time to come.

## CHAPTER X

### SUGGESTIONS

WERE I asked for advice by those considering the Bar as a profession by which to live, I could do nothing better than quote the words of a friend of mine, Professor J. A. Strahan, to a student who consulted him years ago on that subject.

A long and well-considered letter, entering fully into the matter and with ample recognition of the ability of his correspondent, ended somewhat as follows : “ The final and most important question is, Have you the material backing? for without that I should hesitate to advise the step you contemplate.”

Material backing was explained to mean solicitors who could be depended upon for briefs, or friends or relatives in such political, mercantile, or social positions as could ensure work being given.

For those who lack such advantages the overcrowding of the Bar renders that profession a most precarious means of livelihood.

In the English Law List are the names of



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thousands of men, most of whom intended to practice, and who had justifiable hopes of success; but when one realises that there is only sufficient work to provide a moderate income for about one out of every ten it is easy to understand why so many, after a time of weary waiting, betake themselves to other walks in life.

I have often thought that if a record could be kept for even a dozen years of the disappointed hopes and frustrated ambitions of those who have been called to the Bar this "Tragedy of the Temple" would form one of the saddest volumes ever written.

In view of this I am not sure that I would not go even further than Professor Strahan and say, "Without material backing the risks are so enormous that I would advise you not to take them."

As youth, however, rarely desires to profit by the experience of age—else what a dull thing life would be—and as young men will continue to be attracted to the Bar as the moth to the candle, I venture to offer a few suggestions to aspirants to the legal profession.

The first may seem so elementary, that I prefer to give it as a quotation from one of the most brilliant members of the legal profession, Sir Edward Clarke, the substance of whose advice

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was "Study elocution, and endeavour to acquire clear utterance and distinct enunciation."

Sir Edward, speaking at a banquet given by the Olympian Dramatic Club in Oxford to Sir H. Beerbohm Tree, pressed this matter on his audience, among whom there were, presumably, many future barristers. After modestly saying he believed he owed much of his success in life to a teacher of elocution, who took a warm interest in him in his boyhood, he pointed out that jurors and witnesses have often as much difficulty in understanding counsel as he has in understanding them.

It should also be remembered that judges are very often of an age when their hearing is not so acute as in earlier years, and though I have been extremely fortunate in this respect, there are many to whom time has been less kind, and whose difficulty in following indistinct utterances is sometimes great.

It is, therefore, vitally important that counsel should speak so as to be easily heard by those whom he wishes to influence.

The next matter to which I should like to call attention will no doubt also seem extremely trifling. It is in regard to the many *aliases* by which a client is often described.

I believe it frequently happens that neither

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judge, jury, witnesses, nor perhaps even the litigants themselves, are clear as to who is meant by “ my client ”—“ the plaintiff ”—“ Mr. Smith ”—“ we,” etc., etc.

No such difficulty could arise if one term of description, and one only, were used throughout the entire case. This matter has been dealt with by Professor Strahan in his recently published and most interesting book, *The Bench and the Bar*.

I may, perhaps, also direct attention to the desirability of using clear and simple language in Court, and avoiding such words as may cause confusion in the mind of any one concerned in the trial. A judge once said to a witness, “ Your testimony is very difficult to understand, you should not deal so much in ambiguities ”; whereupon the witness who happened to be a horse-dealer, indignantly replied, “ My Lord, I denounce the implication, I never owned an ambiguity in my life; all my horses are thoroughbreds ! ”

Equal lack of comprehension was shown when a lady, after the passing of the Ballot Act, inquired of her coachman, “ Brown, do you wish to exercise the franchise ? ” and was met with the question, “ Which ’oss is that, ma’am ? ”

Once when I was trying a case, the accused was brought from the dock to the witness-box,



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and when summing up, I said, “ You *may* not give so much weight to this man’s evidence because he has come from the dock.” No one present could have had any doubt but that my meaning was, “ You may *perhaps* not give so much weight,” etc. However, the case was appealed and the verdict quashed because “ may ” was taken to mean “ must ”—a word which, in that connection, would, of course, have been quite improper for me to use.

Under the old Scottish Law, I am not sure that a clergyman who would have allowed to pass unchallenged the statement : “ He married my mother,” might not have laid himself open to a charge of bigamy ; at any rate it would have been what Lord Cockburn or other distinguished law lords might have described as “ a nice point.”

These illustrations show the necessity for that clearness of expression for which I plead, for the ambiguities to which our language lends itself are innumerable—but of immense value to the legal profession !

Perhaps Lord Cockburn’s procedure, when at the Bar, could often be followed with advantage. It was thus described by himself :—

“ When addressing a jury I invariably picked out the stupidest-looking fellow of the lot and addressed myself specially to him—for this good

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reason : I knew that if I convinced *him*, I would be sure to carry all the rest ! ”

It is said that French has become the language of diplomacy because it precludes, more than any other, the possibility of those ambiguities, to which our own language readily lends itself, and of which the famous definition of a diplomatist as, “ An honest gentleman sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country,” is an example.

“ Madam,” said a courteous sailor, to an old lady whom he was conducting over the *Victory*, and to whom he pointed out a brass plate that was let into the deck : “ This is the spot on which the great Nelson fell.” “ Well, indeed, it is no wonder, for I nearly slipped on it myself,” was the innocent reply.

The next suggestion I would venture to make is, “ Do not bully or browbeat witnesses.” Merciless cross-examination has often proved a high road to success, but can any one doubt that the loss to the cross-examiner is, in less material ways, proportionately great ? Furthermore, it is well to remember that such methods are entirely disapproved of by most judges and suppressed when possible, and therefore the difference between cross-examining and examining crossly should at all times be borne in mind.

Bullying of witnesses is much less safe in

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Ireland than in England, owing to the nimble wit and power of ready retort for which the Irish are celebrated, and which have often been found very embarrassing to counsel who was trying to score. Many examples of this are to be found in Judge Bodkin's very racy book, *Recollections of an Irish Judge*.

The last subject on which I may, perhaps, offer an opinion is in regard to cases which are palpably dishonest.

Apart altogether from the ethical side of the question, and putting the matter merely on the low ground of policy and self-advancement, I do not hesitate to say, "Have nothing to do with these," for a barrister can seriously tarnish his reputation by being associated with a few shady cases. In the same connection, I should like to say, "Never deceive the judge, even if by so doing you may win a verdict for your client, for the judge who becomes aware of the deception will never trust you again."

I am only aware of having been deceived by counsel on two occasions. On one of these a prisoner, whose existence is a plague-spot in London life, escaped conviction, and is no doubt at present continuing the corruption of youth. In the other case a guilty man also escaped, but this was not such a disaster to the community.



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The barristers who secured these verdicts for their clients by conscious and deliberate falsehood are a disgrace to any honourable calling.

. . . . .

It is a matter to be greatly deplored that the dishonesty of lawyers has become a byword, but would there be dishonesty on their part if there was no demand for it by the public who so readily hurl these accusations against the legal profession?

The amalgamation of the two branches of the profession would make deceptions more difficult, and would, in my opinion, be very beneficial to litigants, for lawyers are frequently deceived by those who seek their advice, and are often amazed by the facts brought out in cross-examination, which have been carefully concealed by the client.

I have sometimes elicited truths which I suspected were being kept back by saying carelessly, as a matter of speculation, "I wonder what charges may be invented by the other side!"

In a will case, in which Daniel O'Connell was once engaged, he noticed that a certain witness always used the words, "there was life in the man," instead of the usual expression, "the man was alive." Struck by the reiteration, he asked :

"Do you say on your oath, the man was alive,

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or is it not a fact that there was merely a living fly in the dead man's mouth ? ”

This proved to be so, but the counsel who had called the witness with such confidence was, till that moment, unaware of the fraud.

In a libel case in which I was engaged for the defendant, my client declared in the most solemn manner, that his sole offence had consisted in writing *one* objectionable postcard. I dwelt on this point as forcibly as I could, but to my consternation the opposing counsel produced at least a hundred couched in equally scurrilous terms.

On another occasion, my opponent was similarly deceived. He was counsel for a lady whose front teeth had been broken in an accident, and who seemed certain to obtain the substantial damages which were claimed. Though not having the remotest expectation of an answer in the affirmative, and merely wishing to be a little jocose over my failure, I asked, “ Were not the teeth artificial ? ”

To my surprise, and to the dismay of the counsel, who had based his claim on the irreparable nature of the loss and the pain endured by his client, this proved to be so !

That deceptions are not confined to members of the legal profession will be seen from the following

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story which I heard related by Lord O'Brien of Kilfenora, one of Ireland's most famous Lord Chief Justices, who was known to his opponents as "Peter the Packer," and in the West of Ireland as "Masther Pether."

A man came bounding up to him in the lobby of one of the Court houses on his circuit, saying, "Masther Pether, I want you to take my brother's case." [It may be remarked that in thinly populated districts any one about to "take the law," as it is called in Ireland, of another, believes that his case is known not only to—the whole countryside, but to the entire Bar and Bench as well.]

"Masther Pether" replied, "I cannot possibly do so, for I shall be fully engaged in the Civil Court; but what has your brother done?"

"Och, yer Honour," replied the man, "next to nothing—he jist laid his stick on a boy's head, and—he died onder it," the fact being that his brother had beaten out a man's brains.

O'Brien said, "You must get some one else, for, as I have already said, I shall be occupied with a civil case, and besides, you have told me your brother is guilty."

The man pressed his request, saying, "The rayson I want yer Honour is because nobody else could get him off, for it must be a counsellor who spakes the Irish well."



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“Then,” said O’Brien, “take my card to the man whose name I have written on it, he speaks Irish splendidly, and may take the case.”

A few days later the man came to O’Brien in great delight saying, “We won easily, and my brother got off!”

“Then you got the man I sent you to?” said O’Brien.

“Och no, yer Honour,” was the reply, “he was too stickin’ about money. He wanted five poun’ and we had only three poun’ ten.”

“Well, what did you do?”

“Why, sor, we just tould the intarpreter he would get the whole money if my brother got off—an’ he got off!”

The following instance of deception on the part of a litigant greatly astonished me, and I have never been able to understand the motive for it. I defended a curate who was co-respondent in a divorce case. The woman who was respondent did not appear and the jury found against my client. Sir Gorell Barnes sent me a note saying he did not in the least agree with the verdict of the jury and advising me to appeal. The chief fact that weighed with the jury was the non-appearance of the woman; their conclusion was that she would have come to give evidence if the curate had not been guilty. The facts were

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that she had left her husband and disappeared and could not be traced. After the trial, and in view of the appeal for a new trial, it was very important that she should be found; and a consultation of over an hour was held in my chambers to discuss the question as to what papers we should advertise in, begging her to reveal her whereabouts.

The questions raised at our discussion were as to her relatives, what part of the country she would be likely to go to, what papers she was in the habit of seeing, etc. Our funds were limited and we could only afford to advertise in about a dozen papers.

The curate entered into earnest discussion of all these points, and, as he was paying for the advertisements, any doubts as to his guilt were entirely dispelled by his apparent anxiety to help us to select the best papers for our purpose. As a matter of fact he was keeping the woman in his rooms at that very time, and no doubt returned home to laugh over how he had gulled his solicitor, my junior and myself.

It seems to me the best thing one can do after discovering that such deceptions have been practised is to ride for a fall. To tie up one's brief and leave the Court is too dramatic to be approved of or to appeal to the average barrister.

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I can scarcely hope that these few suggestions, though offered with the best intentions, will prove of benefit to any one, as most of us, in youth at all events, resemble my famous countryman, Curran, who said, "My father left me a fortune of good advice which I have kept righteously, for I never used an atom of it since."

Advice, indeed, is one of those commodities of which the supply is out of all proportion to the demand, and one of the few things which it is invariably more blessed to give than to receive.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

HAVING been asked by an old friend, Rev. Dr. Maconaghie, to lecture in aid of the funds of his Church, I gladly did so, choosing as my subject : " The British Empire."

The lecture was delivered in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, in October 1889, to an audience of between three and four thousand people. The chairman was Lord Arthur Hill, Unionist Whip, and on the platform were the late Sir Edward Harland, M.P. for North Belfast, Sir James Hazlett, Sir John Preston, and other prominent Ulster men.

Ten days later I received a letter asking would I accept nomination for a perfectly safe Unionist seat, with all my expenses paid.

Nothing could have surprised me more, as I had never taken any part in Irish politics, nor had I any desire to enter Parliament at that time, and I knew that to be elected for an Irish seat when I had been but five years at the English Bar would be anything but an advantage to me in my legal career. I replied to my correspondent

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to this effect, adding—— But let me remember the saddler's wedding! and briefly say that I was informed the seat was East Down, from which Captain Ker was anxious to retire, and that the leaders of the Party would be glad to meet me if I would agree to become the Unionist candidate.

Unwise as it was to enter Parliament at that time, the offer was too attractive to decline, and I finally consented to be nominated, but I refused to have any part of my expenses paid.

The late Duke of Abercorn and Lord Arthur Hill then arranged for me to meet the Whips and other leaders of the party at the house of the late Lord Deramore, previous to issuing my address to the electors of East Down.

Before taking any steps in the matter I called on Captain Ker, to find out at first hand if he wished to retire, or if there was any truth in the rumour that had reached me that pressure was being brought on him to do so, as in the latter case nothing would have induced me to become a candidate for his constituency.

I well remember his answer: "You cannot be more anxious to get into Parliament than I am to get out of it."

Having received this assurance, I at once issued my address, and was returned unopposed. I held the seat without a contest during three

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general elections until 1902, when I was appointed a Commissioner of the Central Criminal Court and a Judge of the City of London Court.

I suppose most men who contemplate entering Parliament often bethink themselves of representing their native place, and I would have always preferred East Donegal to any constituency in the United Kingdom.

It had, however, been captured by a Kerry man, Arthur O'Connor, K.C., now a brother judge. I warned him that I purposed some day ousting him from his seat, but that was merely idle boasting on my part, for he had too strong a hold on the affection and respect of his constituents for that amiable desire to have been possible of fulfilment; and although I think I could have counted on some Catholic votes, these would have been fully counterbalanced by the Presbyterian votes accorded to him—one of his nomination papers having been signed exclusively by members of that Church.

I may say that the honour of being selected to represent a division which had hitherto been unknown to me, even by name, was due to the fact that the leaders of the party recognised that platform work in Great Britain was essential to the Unionist cause, and were on the look-out for some one able and willing to help in that way.



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Apparently it was inferred from my lecture in Belfast that I could be of service, and as during the years I held my seat I addressed meetings all over Great Britain in support of parliamentary candidates, and took part in over three hundred contested elections, I am glad to think I did not disappoint those who relied on me. I never accepted a penny, or benefit of any kind, for my services, and always chose to speak in those constituencies where the cause was weak, in preference to those where our party predominated, or the candidate's return was practically safe, owing to his wealth, personal popularity, or family prestige. No men did better service to the Unionist cause on the platforms of Great Britain than four of my Ulster colleagues—the late Colonel Saunderson, Mr. (now Sir) W. G. Macartney, Mr. (now Sir) T. W. Russell, and Mr. T. H. Sloan. Their support was eagerly sought by, and readily given to, candidates requiring a helping hand in their election contests. Mr. Sloan's work was especially valuable, as he had great influence in working-class constituencies, and it was much to be regretted that he lost his seat (Belfast S.) owing, I believe, to some split in the Orange Society there.

A Member of Parliament first realises the importance supposed to belong to his new posi-

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tion as British legislator when he finds the traffic stopped at Westminster in order to allow him to cross the street with leisurely dignity. This attention was always displeasing to me, and I took such elaborate pains to escape the policeman's watchful eye that, had I been a Nationalist member, I should probably have been arrested on suspicion of carrying dynamite, or being in possession of something of a treasonable nature; but has it not been well said that one man may with impunity steal a horse when another dare not look over the hedge?

Once inside the House a danger that has to be guarded against, is that of transgressing any of the multitudinous parliamentary rules.

It was said by Mr. Timothy Healy that the only possible way to become acquainted with them was to break them, and on one occasion I thought my education was about to begin when, in my very inexperienced days in Parliament, I was called to order. Knowing that to many of my constituents this would convey the idea that I was guilty of some grave misdemeanour, and being quite unaware how I had transgressed, I was seriously perturbed.

I have never forgotten how that most charming and chivalrous of Irishmen, and most witty and delightful of orators, Mr. Thomas Sexton, rose

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instantly and showed that I had in no way broken any parliamentary rule. He, no doubt, thought it a small thing to do, even for a political opponent, but it evoked an amount of gratitude on my part which would probably surprise no one more than Mr. Sexton himself.

I have been often asked for my opinion as to who were the most distinguished men in the House of Commons during my membership.

Of those who then occupied a prominent position in the British Parliament, and continue to do so, there are many different opinions, but it was the experience of almost every one that visitors in those days invariably wanted to see—first Gladstone, and next Parnell.

If both happened to be absent, the member acting as host felt much as the proprietor of a menagerie might feel on finding that his two lions had made their escape, and that he had only tame animals of secondary importance to exhibit.

I never heard Gladstone speak on any great occasion, but in the opinion of most people he was the greatest orator of his day. He always impressed me as being able to convince himself of whatever he wished to believe, and this power enabled him to advocate, whole-heartedly and with great success, any measure he desired to carry through.



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His reverence for the traditions of Parliament was very impressive, and the rapt attention with which he seemed to listen to even the feeblest utterances of the least important of his party was worthy of imitation, though often amusing.

Parnell was to all of us the man of mystery, aloof alike from follower and opponent, and it was only after his death his greatness as a political power was realised.

Sir Charles Dilke always struck me as so conversant with any and every matter which came up for discussion, that when he rose to speak he appeared more like a scholarly teacher who had, perforce, to set his blundering class right, than a colleague debating with colleagues.

Lord Randolph Churchill was a powerful personality in the House; but it was as an open-air orator, addressing and moving to his will a great assembly, that he had no second since, perhaps, the days of O'Connell.

Of the popular and attractive speakers there was none who could more quickly empty the smoking-room and clear the terrace than Mr. Birrell when he rose to take part in a debate.

One of my earliest friends in the House was Sir Ernest Spencer, M.P. for West Bromwich. There was no man whose society I more enjoyed, and as, during the many years of our intimacy,

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he seemed to me to possess those qualities which have made the name of Englishman respected over the world, I always felt myself very fortunate in making his acquaintance and gaining his friendship.

George Wyndham and John Redmond were men regarding whom I cannot think there could have been two opinions. There was not a delightful or desirable quality with which the former did not seem endowed. Beauty of person, grace of bearing, charm of manner, high intellectual gifts, and a heart of gold were among his attributes. He always suggested to me a Sir Galahad or a Philip Sidney adorning the nineteenth century.

Lord Charles Beresford's magnanimous statement regarding him in his *Memoirs*<sup>1</sup> should be remembered, for it is creditable alike to the writer and the subject of it. "Mr. Wyndham," he wrote, "with his Land Act did more for Ireland than any Government that ever was, and I say it who have lost a great part of my income under the operation of the Act"; but he adds the sad comment that "the Irish would not have obtained the Wyndham Act had they not been incorrigibly intractable."

Occupied as Mr. Wyndham was by high

<sup>1</sup> Volume II. p. 342.

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affairs of State, no one ever needed to hesitate to approach him when there was a service he could render, or a favour he could grant; and in serving or gratifying others he seemed to have that pleasure which most of us only experience when serving or gratifying ourselves.

John Redmond was not only pre-eminent as an orator, and possessed of qualities essential in a statesman, but ever impressed me as one who loved his country with a strength of which few are capable. In political warfare he always fought with clean weapons, and would have scorned to win a victory for Ireland by trickery, as he would have scorned to gain a personal advantage by similar means.

Those of his followers who blamed him for compromise know nothing of statesmanship, and might as well blame the framers of Magna Charta for not including in that document the Reform Bill and the Ballot Act.

He won the sincere respect of his opponents, as his brother "Willie" won their affection, and both gave their lives for their country. It strikes me as fitting enough to class George Wyndham and John Redmond together as men of great endowments, absolutely devoid of self-interest, who loved Ireland and were deserted by those who should have been their unfailing supporters.



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If by any miscalculation at the last, Redmond lost the confidence of his followers, it was because he was as unable to understand a breach of contract in political life as he would have been unable to understand it in every-day affairs.

George Wyndham and the Redmond brothers dead are understood alike by friend and foe, and are recognised as men who shed lustre on the days to which they belonged.

All three may have foreseen desertion, for they were probably aware how often that fate befalls those who devote their lives disinterestedly to public causes.

I understand that those who rejected Redmond's leadership believed he erred in agreeing to a temporary division of Ireland and in trusting to the good faith of Britain. This is not my opinion. I believe he acted as a far-seeing and truly patriotic statesman, who felt a justifiable pride in Ireland's part in the building up of the Empire, and who abhorred the idea of any resort to arms, well knowing its futility.

Was he not right in thinking that if Irishmen came to know one another, and were working together for the good of their common country, mutual confidence and mutual appreciation would speedily result, and that the evils always engendered by the planting in a community of

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colonists alien in race and religion would rapidly disappear? It was manifestly his view that Ulster Scot and Munster Celt would come to recognise, not merely as regards Ireland but equally as regards Great Britain, that "neither can be safe nor sound but in the other's weal."

. . . . .

To strengthen the British electors in a belief in the Union was the principal work of the Unionist party during all my time in Parliament. In this work I took a very prominent part, whether rightly or wrongly I cannot now say, for when I see Ireland under the Union an armed camp, and England either unable or unwilling to keep order there, I am far from feeling as sure as I formerly did that the maintenance of the Union is a benefit to either country.

Few of my colleagues in the House of Commons are there to-day, and of Irishmen only Sir Edward Carson, Mr. T. P. O'Connor and another Mr. O'Connor, familiarly and popularly known as "Long John."

It is now pleasant to remember that, though we Irishmen differed in politics and creed, no element of personal unfriendliness ever existed among us.

No doubt we often supported our cause with

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more zeal than discretion, and no doubt in our political encounters offensive or ill-judged words were sometimes spoken, but we always met as honourable combatants in a battle honourably fought, and were, I believe, equally animated by the desire to secure what we conceived to be best for our country, and for the Empire to which we were proud to belong.

I have said I had but one experience of being called to order in the House. I had also but one experience of what is known as “heckling” by my constituents, and this I owed to the late Major William Redmond.

A proposal had been made to erect a statue in the Palace Yard to Oliver Cromwell. I had given the matter no attention until Mr. Redmond came to me, and in his characteristically frank and boyish manner explained that this statue would be most offensive to Irish Roman Catholics, *and was meant to be so*, and that he would be glad if I would vote against it—which I agreed at once to do.

On my next visit to East Down, my Orange friends met me, looking grimly conscious of a duty to be performed, and asked, was it a fact that I had opposed the erection of a statue to Oliver Cromwell? I replied by another question: “Who was Oliver Cromwell?”



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They did not seem to know very much about him, and I looked blankly ignorant, but eager for enlightenment.

Suddenly I asked, "Was he the man who said he would send all the papists in Ireland to hell or Connaught?"

Satisfaction shone on their faces, and the spokesman said, "The very man, sir." "Well," I replied, "I certainly voted against his statue, for I am no believer in alternatives, and he should have given them no choice."

That the men were neither fanatical, nor lacking in a sense of humour, is shown by the fact that they made some laughing reply and left me apparently with a sense of a duty duly performed, and I heard no more in my constituency of the Protector or his statue.

Had its erection been suggested on the ground that Cromwell's adjuration, "My brethren, in the name of Christ I beseech you to think it possible you may be mistaken," had led men to more readily recognise the possibility of their own fallibility in two such highly controversial and problematical matters as politics and creed, I would have had more difficulty in acceding to Mr. Redmond's request.

In the South and West of Ireland "The curse

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of Cromwell on you ” is still, I am told, the direst malediction man can hurl against his fellow man ; but that his memory is also held in abhorrence in Ulster, by at least the Catholic population, can be seen in an incident related by the late Rev. Dr. Berkeley of Lurgan, Moderator of the Assembly, and one of the most interesting and graphic story-tellers among a body of men by no means deficient in that art. Once, when driving over a long country road, he beguiled the tedium of the journey by chatting with his driver. By chance he mentioned the name of Oliver Cromwell, and was astounded by the ejaculation of his jehu, “ Well, he’s in hell any way ! ”

Dr. Berkeley, as in duty bound, expostulated with his companion for his want of charity, and his presumption in taking upon himself the office of judge, when the man replied, “ Well, I ask your Reverence to tell me the truth, as between man and man, if Oliver Cromwell is not in hell, what was hell made for ? ”

The Dublin or Killarney car-driver is supposed to be a professional wit, and, as a consequence, many a silly joke is carried off or excused by the words “ As the Irish car-driver said.” But in my experience he is, though occasionally an

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interesting and informative companion, less remarkable for his wit than for his shrewd observations on men and things.

During the twelve years in which I represented East Down my relations with my constituents were of the pleasantest, until 1900, when the member for South Tyrone, Mr. T. W. Russell, with all the heat of a new convert, propounded a scheme in connection with the compulsory sale of land which led the farmers of Ireland to believe that he was about to secure for them undreamt-of benefits.

Naturally this scheme was enthusiastically hailed by the farming class. A large section of the Press loudly acclaimed Mr. Russell as "the man of the hour," and he was for a short time practically the political dictator of Ulster.

From first to last I never believed in the "crusade," or the tactics of this latest recruit to the cause of compulsory sale, and, having the courage of my convictions, I informed my constituents on the platform and through the Press that Mr. Russell was leading the farmers to expect the impossible; that his methods would retard compulsory sale for years; and that his procedure could only end in his joining the Home Rule party.

One often has what the French call "a fine



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opportunity for saying nothing," but such an opportunity I was never able to seize when my convictions urged me to speak out, no matter what the consequence to myself or my career; and I never regretted the opposition I gave to Mr. Russell's "crusade," though it was the cause of much loss to me, as well as of great unpleasantness in my constituency.

I was returned to Parliament to support the Union. I had for years done all in my power in favour of compulsory sale, and in support of the rights of the farmers, and I could not follow a lead which I knew to be injurious to these causes.

Had I thought it right to take part in Mr. Russell's "crusade" I would first of all have resigned my Unionist seat.

The support given to him all over Ulster, when attacking the Unionist Government and Unionist members, had much to do with leading the British electors to believe that Ulster's opposition to Home Rule no longer existed, and had consequently much to do with the overthrow of the Unionist Government in 1906.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOME ELECTIONEERING MEMORIES

As most of my work on behalf of the Union was, by my own desire, done in those constituencies where our cause was weak, and the Radical party strong and thoroughly organised, I had, of course, many very stormy meetings to address, and these I always greatly enjoyed.

My chairmen are in themselves worthy of a chapter in any volume, as they were often chosen on account of their social position, and without any thought as to whether or not they could control a troublesome audience, or guide speakers, who came from a distance, safely across local pitfalls.

I recollect once being present at a meeting of the Primrose League at which the Earl of — occupied the chair, and a very distinguished actress was the chief attraction of the programme. Before her contribution to the evening's entertainment was due, she said to me, "I have promised to recite, and my most successful recitation is 'The Charge of the Light

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Brigade,' but it is so hackneyed that I do not care to give it unless the chairman would specially ask for it as being appropriate to the present time." Having had frequent experience of what some chairmen are capable of in the way of blunders, I tried to dissuade her from making this suggestion, but failed. How well I remember her look of consternation when the Earl, who meant only what was kind and appreciative, said, "Mrs. — tells me she is most anxious to recite 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' as it is her best piece; but as it is very hackneyed she could only do so by special request and because we are now engaged in this unfortunate war [in South Africa], but I am sure I may tell her we shall all be very pleased to hear it."

I refrained from saying to the discomfited lady "I told you so!" and tried to console her with some of my own experiences, of which the following remains in my memory.

At a time when many Unionist speakers were being sent over from Ireland to undertake political work on the platforms of England and Scotland, their usefulness was discounted by some of their opponents, who declared that the propaganda of these Irishmen was all a matter of pounds, shillings and pence, and that they would as readily support the other side if equally well



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remunerated. Such talk naturally had its effect with many, and the value of the work done by these Irish delegates was very materially lessened; so on one occasion, when I had to address a very large audience on the Irish question, I asked the chairman to say, when introducing me, that I had never at any time received a penny, or a favour or benefit of any kind for any political work I had done.

What were my feelings when my well-intentioned friend began by saying, "Mr. Rentoul, who has worked so hard for the Unionist cause, asks me to say that he has never been paid for his services, nor indeed been given a reward of any sort. You will, I am sure, agree with me that he has much reason to be dissatisfied; and I have no doubt you will all readily admit that his speech this evening fully entitles him to remuneration!"

It is, of course, as right and permissible to accept payment for political work as for work of any other sort, but when a man finds it possible to uphold or defend a cause gratuitously, his doing so carries more weight, as it cannot be attributed by opponents to merely mercenary considerations.

At the time to which I refer the breaking up of meetings was a form of political warfare very

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frequently adopted by the Radical party, and occasionally—though more rarely, I am glad to say—by ours. Soon, however, I acquired nerve, and resembled the London child who played merrily in an underground station during an air raid, and when a terrified adult said, “Sit down and be quiet; don’t you know there’s an air raid on?” looked up rather contemptuously, and said, “I have been through three raids already, and I don’t call this half a raid!”

Often when people regarded a political audience as rowdy or troublesome, I felt like that child—inclined to say, “I don’t call this half a row—I have been through an earthquake!”

Here are the facts :—

A meeting at which I was to speak, in one of the Midland Counties, was held in a tent in which no arrangements had been made for lighting. The necessity for lamps had been overlooked, owing probably to too large an executive committee, for in most cases one finds, as Spurgeon did, that a committee of two, with one always absent, is the most efficient for all practical purposes.

The audience had assembled during the gloaming, and when the speakers arrived it was pitch dark, and we were led on to the platform as helpless as if we had been stone blind. In that

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part of the country people applauded with their feet, and, as on the damp grass no sound whatever was produced, we might as well have been addressing an audience of deaf mutes.

Suddenly some one rushed into the tent to say that the chairman's house was on fire. Before the excitement caused by that announcement had passed away, the bells of a neighbouring church rang out a deafening peal, and it was only with the utmost difficulty the speakers succeeded in pitching their voices so as to be heard by even a section of the audience.

To be quite invisible, to be rendered almost inaudible, to hear no applause, and to be suddenly deprived of our chairman, might seem troubles enough for one evening. But worse was yet to come, and it came in the form of an earthquake !

In the Middle Ages these catastrophes would have been proclaimed by our opponents to be a sure sign that we were advocating an iniquitous cause, and no doubt by ourselves as proof that we could meet and overcome all the nefarious machinations of the evil one.

On another occasion, when Mr. Winston Churchill and I were speaking near Brighton, lime was flung over us in a most cowardly manner, in the hope of rendering us unable to



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attend a very large meeting in which we were to take part later in the day.

Happily the lime reached only our clothes and not our faces, and we were careful not to remove it, for at the great demonstration in the evening, it supplied us with a strong argument against the party which resorted to such tactics, and also brought home to the audience the desirability of fair play even in the arena of politics.

I had another exciting electioneering experience at Camborne, when speaking for my old friend Mr. Arthur Strauss. Before setting out for the meeting, I was handed a skull-cracker and a blackthorn, as neat and handy weapons of defence; and the candidate and I were met at the door of the hotel by a bodyguard of his supporters, similarly armed, who were to protect us on our way to the hall. Fortunately, I got the meeting into good humour, and physical violence was not resorted to, nor was there the usual attempt made to storm the platform; circumstances which, I was afterwards told, made the meeting quite a record one in that division.

“Made in Germany” was the battle-cry of our opponents, and the chief objection to the candidate, so I emphasised the fact that many excellent things had come from Germany,

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including, not only Martin Luther and our royal line, but even the English race itself and largely the English language, with the result that "Made in Germany" ceased to be a term of reproach, and was one of the most fortunate electioneering hits I ever made, for it meant capturing the enemies' most dangerous gun and turning it on themselves.

Years have passed since then, and "Made in Germany" has naturally become in Britain the equivalent of "The curse of Cromwell" in Ireland; but Mr. Strauss came to England as a child fifty-five years ago, and all his interests were in this country, so in spite of violent attacks on the part of the more prejudiced portion of his constituents, and the timid advice of many of his political friends, he refused to resign his seat in Parliament, and he proved to be right, for not only did he retain the confidence of his leaders and the respect of all his parliamentary colleagues, but he proved a most useful member by his wide knowledge and his keen insight in delicate commercial questions.

Although recognising, as every one did, the danger of foreign foes in our midst, I yet felt that in expatriating every one of German birth, or German descent, we should be acting with a harshness which would require immense justifica-

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tion. Those who live for over fifty years in a foreign country and then return to their own, find themselves strangers in a strange land, and though they may take with them all their money, how much else remains which they cannot take—their friends, their influence, and the reputation which they have built up?

For those on whom there was ground for a shadow of suspicion, of whose loyalty there could be even the smallest doubt or question, there should not have been a moment of hesitation regarding expatriation at a time when our country stood at the crisis of her fate, but it was far otherwise in the case of those who had not only never given cause for such doubt, but whose every interest depended on the success of the Allies. Not only was that so in Mr. Strauss's case, but his young and promising son, of barely military age, enlisted at once on the outbreak of the war and gave his life in our defence.

As the Press has often made merry at my expense, it is permissible for me to record the following incident.

Very early in my political life a reporter called on me to say that he was appointed to report me at a meeting, at which I was to speak on the following day, and to supply the report to



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various Unionist papers, but that he had all arrangements made for a badly needed week-end holiday, and by giving him the MS. of my speech, I would confer on him a great obligation, as otherwise he must remain in town.

As I had neither notes nor manuscript, he urged me to dictate to him what I purposed saying, and seeing his anxiety to secure his brief holiday I agreed to do so.

The undertaking was more difficult than I anticipated, for I found that, as the meeting was regarded as a very critical one, on which a good deal depended, he had orders to report me very fully. To make a speech to an audience of one, in a dark little room in the Temple, proved by no means easy. However, I supplied what "copy" I could, and between us we got in sufficient "applause"—"loud applause" and "hear, hears" to gratify any speaker, however self-satisfied.

Owing to a misunderstanding I arrived at the meeting two hours late, and just as the audience was dispersing at 4 p.m. I explained matters to the candidate, telling him that if I attempted to suppress my speech—now no doubt in type—I might get the reporter, whose address in Brighton was unknown to me, into serious trouble.

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It was a bitter March day, and the snow was falling heavily, but both the candidate and I were aware that a speech must be made, otherwise, what a possible occasion for the adversary !

We therefore borrowed a chair from an obliging neighbour, and from this temporary platform I proposed, in two sentences, a vote of confidence in the candidate.

As he and the owner of the chair and three passers-by formed the entire audience the vote was passed unanimously, and not only did a full report of my supposed speech appear on the following Monday in various papers, but in one of them a leading article was published, stating that my oratorical effort had created a great impression, and proved me to be a valuable addition to the Conservative party !

Once, when travelling to Northampton to speak for the Unionist candidate, I met Mr. Labouchere, the senior Liberal member for the division, and made the journey with him.

On reaching our destination he said, "It is utterly useless for you to attend to-night's meeting, because I have ordered my people not to allow any of your party a hearing, but above all never to let you begin : so better come and dine with me and do not waste your time."

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I declined his hospitable invitation and said I would look in at the meeting anyhow !

On reaching the hall I found the front seats packed with men, evidently well skilled in all the arts of roughing down speakers.

It was "Do or die" with me, so without waiting to let the enemy open fire, I shouted at the top of my voice, "The greatest man in England is William Ewart Gladstone."

As the meeting had been organised by the Conservatives, and I had been brought expressly to oppose Gladstone and his policy, the Radical agitators were too bewildered to know what to do. Here was an opponent proclaiming their own policy, and preaching from their favourite text, so in roughing him down for this statement, they would be repudiating their own leader.

I then reviewed Gladstone's past at Eton, at Oxford, and in Parliament, describing him as unrivalled as a scholar, orator and parliamentarian. By this time the Radicals were enthusiastically with me, but the Conservatives were restless and unhappy.

Explaining that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury were known to be intimate friends, and that neither knew me, even by sight, I said, "My object in supporting either one or the other is, or ought to be, your object. I wish to support



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the man whose policy will be most beneficial to my wife and children—and I hope you wish to do the same for those dependent on you.” As this, of course, met the views of the audience, I proceeded with my arguments in favour of Lord Salisbury’s programme, which were listened to with the greatest attention, and I made, I believe, many converts to our side.

Meeting Mr. Labouchere next day I said, “You have not got your people as well in hand as I expected to find them.” His reply was, “You infernal rascal, I heard all about your trick last night !”

. . . . .

A common practice at elections was that of putting embarrassing questions to the candidate, especially if he happened to be young and inexperienced.

In dealing with these organised paid interrupters I often found they could be silenced by a quick retort, especially if it was possible to turn the laughter of the audience against them; and a question in reply to their question, often produced on them as disturbing an effect as that produced by Mark Twain’s guide when the American tourist, tired of the name of Columbus, evinced an irrepressible desire to know if he was dead, and if so of what he had died.

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A popular or unpopular cry has always had considerable influence in elections.

Many decades ago, when Colonel Connelly was parliamentary candidate for Co. Donegal, the chief objection raised against him by his opponents was that he had run the blockade during the American civil war, and was therefore totally unfit to represent that constituency.

This charge was once being pressed with great indignation by an opponent, when some one in the audience, anxious for information, asked, "What is running the blockade?"

Utterly non-plussed, the speaker thought for a moment and then said, "Well, it's hard to explain, but it's just a dodge of the Tory landlords for cheating the tenant farmers."

Not long ago a fiery speech was delivered in the House of Commons by a very distinguished member, regarding some wrong in connection with the fluctuating value of the Indian rupee.

While enlarging eloquently on this grievance, some one interrupted with the question, "How much is a rupee?" and to the great amusement of the House, it turned out that the speaker had not the slightest idea!

. . . . .  
Through being unacquainted with the locality and its inhabitants, those coming from a distance

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sometimes make rather serious—or it may be amusing—blunders.

In Co. Donegal “a mouth” is the provincialism for a well-meaning but blundering fool, and once a speaker, unaware of this, created the greatest consternation by saying, in regard to a local magnate, “I must bring my remarks to a close as there is a well-known mouth to address you,” meaning, of course, that he was to be followed by another speaker whom they knew.

I had a somewhat similar experience at a meeting in one of the Midland Counties.

In illustrating how Mr. Gladstone had joined the Home Rule party after failing to bring it over to him, I said he reminded me of my well-known fellow-countryman, Sheridan, who was returning one night from dinner, where he had dined not wisely but too well (laughter); in fact he was drunk (much laughter).

Pleased to find my remarks so entertaining, I continued, saying, “Sheridan came up to a man lying by the roadside who was even more drunk than himself—and that is saying a great deal” (immense laughter!).

The fallen man said, “Help me up, help me up!” and Sheridan went over, like the good fellow he was (much applause), and tried to raise him, but, being unable to do so because of his



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own condition (great laughter), he said, " Well, I can't help you up, but I'll lie down beside you " (laughter and cheers).

I then enlarged fully on the parallel between Gladstone joining the Home Rulers and Sheridan lying down beside his incapacitated friend, but after the meeting the pleasure which I felt in finding my illustration so much appreciated, was considerably damped when the local doctor introduced himself as Dr. Sheridan, an Irishman, and the only Sheridan the audience had ever heard of. The doctor, however, had nothing to fear from such a story being attached to him, and I spent the evening at his house to my pleasure, and I hope to his.

About that time it was suspected, though not absolutely known, that negotiations were being carried on between Gladstone and Parnell, but neither seemed anxious to proclaim the connection—a state of affairs which I used to illustrate by the story of a young man who, after escorting his sweetheart to her home one evening, said at parting, " Don't you tell anybody, Eliza Jane, that I saw you home," and received the disconcerting reply, " Don't you be at all afraid, Ezekiel, for I'm just as much ashamed of it as you are."

I was often deluged with questions regarding

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tariff reform and free trade, subjects on which I had heard so many convincing arguments on each side that finally I felt somewhat as Sheridan did when he said, "You should never read a book before reviewing it, as it prejudices you so!"

I occasionally got out of the difficulty by asking the questioner to solve for me the following problem :—

The Mexican dollar is worth 4*s.* in Mexico and worth only 3*s.* 10*d.* in the United States, and the United States dollar is worth 4*s.* in the United States, but worth 3*s.* 10*d.* in Mexico.

A man in Mexico had one Mexican dollar and only one. He went to a public-house and bought twopence worth of whisky and received as his change a United States dollar; then crossing into the United States, he bought twopence worth of whisky and got in change a Mexican dollar.

Going back into Mexico he entered a second public-house, ordered twopence worth of whisky, and was again given a United States dollar in change.

He continued these proceedings till late in the afternoon, when he was found in Mexico helplessly intoxicated with a Mexican dollar in his pocket, no poorer than when he set out.

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Now the problem is, who paid for the whisky? Clearly not the distillers, for they did not let it out until paid for. Clearly none of the publicans, for each publican got a coin worth 4s. and gave one in return worth 3s. 10d. Some one paid for the whisky, and the problem I want solved is : Was it the consumer or the producer?

As this question called for prolonged deliberation, I was safely back in my chambers before a solution was found.

When speaking once in Wales at a very large meeting in the constituency of the present Prime Minister, I acted on an opinion I have always held, that those on the platform should join in the applause accorded by the audience to any speaker, and should not maintain an attitude of indifferent and statuesque repose.

The speeches, with the exception of my own, were in Welsh, but, true to my principle, I tried to outdo the audience in applause, and only learned afterwards, to my chagrin, that all the speeches expressed the warmest approbation of myself and the great influence my visit to the constituency was sure to have !

I believe I erred in this way in common with Benjamin Franklin, who, in Paris, had a similar experience.



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At another meeting in Wales in which I took part, some one at the back of the hall called out, "What about mining royalties?" The candidate had never heard of them and looked anxiously at me for help. I was in almost equal ignorance of the subject, but happily had caught the question as, "What about the cost of Royalty," and as I had recently made up the subject for a lecture on British rule, I readily undertook to answer the question, and gave a full and minute account of every item in the expense of royalty—down to the cost of the last toy bought for the youngest Battenberg baby!—proving that this country was one of the most economically governed in the world.

Incredible as it is, both questioner and audience seemed perfectly satisfied with this totally irrelevant answer, and peace of mind was restored to the worried candidate.

. . . . .  
Although on this and many other occasions I had the opportunity of loyally and dutifully defending our monarchical system of Government, my personal acquaintance with royalty was extremely limited and not particularly happy.

On the occasion of Queen Victoria's jubilee I had the honour of introducing to King Edward,

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then Prince of Wales, a deputation from the Irish Presbyterian Church, but owing to some mistake of a Court official I was announced as Rev. Dr. Leitch, Moderator of the General Assembly. As my dress was that of a Queen's Counsel, His Royal Highness's surprise at seeing a clergyman thus attired was plainly manifest, but I considered I saved the situation by following the announcement with : "To introduce the Rev. Dr. Leitch, Moderator of the Irish General Assembly."

At a garden-party given by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts I felt much honoured when the late Duke of Teck said to me graciously, "I know your face quite well, but cannot for the moment recall your name."

I had too often made use of this social fiction myself to feel unduly flattered, so I merely replied : "I am an Irish member of Parliament," whereupon His Grace made his escape from me with a rapidity which convinced me that he regarded Irish members as very doubtful characters indeed.

A more flattering experience was that of being sent for by the late Duke of Cambridge after I had made a speech in his presence. His Royal Highness said he would be glad of some information in regard to Ireland, and after a little talk

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he asked me if I could give any explanation of the want of loyalty to the Crown that was so manifest in some parts of the country. I indicated how reluctant I was to give a candid opinion on the subject, but on being assured that this was what he desired, and that nothing I said would be taken amiss, I told him I believed the disloyalty was due in very great measure to the continued neglect of Ireland by Her Majesty.

I was greatly surprised when he said, with great emphasis, "I have told the Queen so repeatedly, and I shall tell her your views on the matter."

Whether he did so or not I cannot say, but I can confidently state that if he did, Her Majesty was in no way affected by my opinion !

The correctness of my view, however, was proved on the occasion of the visit of King Edward and Queen Alexandra to Dublin, where at first the citizens received them with marked indifference, but, as the visit extended, the indifference gradually grew into enthusiasm, which soon reached such a height as must have been deeply gratifying, even to those who had been always accustomed elsewhere to overwhelming proofs of devoted loyalty.

Mr. Gatty has published in *Recognita* some of the delightful, informal letters of Mr. George



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Wyndham, who was Irish Chief Secretary at the time. In these there are glowing descriptions of the homage paid to the royal visitors—a homage which was the outcome, not of mere loyalty to the throne, but of appreciation of such tact as the Queen displayed on the occasion of her visit to Maynooth, when she gratified all Roman Catholics by appearing in mourning on account of the recent death of the Pope; or as King Edward showed when by his informal visit to the slums of Dublin he evinced both a confidence in the people, and a disregard of physical danger which appealed to the Irish perhaps as much as did the beauty and grace of the Queen.

Had such visits been more frequent I have no hesitation in stating my belief that the condition of affairs in Ireland would to-day be very different from what it is, and that in no part of their dominions would our royal rulers have had more devoted subjects.

Once, when speaking in Barrow-in-Furness for the late Sir Charles Cayzer, I felt bewildered by the amusement that was evoked every time I alluded to the opposing candidate (Sir Christopher Furness). Each mention of his name was greeted with loud laughter, which surprised me greatly, as he was a foeman fully worthy of our steel and in no respect a subject for derision.

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It was only after the meeting was over that I learned, to my consternation, that all through the evening I had called him Sir Christopher Columbus !

The explanation is, that my boy was preparing, as part of his school-work, an essay on the great explorer, and his name had been dinned into my ears for some weeks prior to the meeting. So familiar had it become, that I was quite unaware I had given, perhaps not entirely inappropriately, the name of Columbus to that other Christopher, whose mighty ships so often crossed the Atlantic.

I frequently spoke for the late Lord Charles Beresford, and on one occasion when there was a great overflow meeting, and what would probably be described as “ a frenzied public demand ” for speeches from him and myself, Lord Charles, with the agility of a midshipman, or indeed of an expert acrobat, mounted a very high wall and delivered his speech to the audience in the street, with as much freedom of gesture as if he had been standing safely on the deck of a man-of-war. When I was called for I assured him that I could no more speak from that wall than I could from the “ crow’s nest ” of a ship.

The audience, however, would not be gainsaid, and Lord Charles declared that speak I

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must. To my unutterable relief, I saw a lamp-post close by, so mounting the wall and hugging the lamp-post with one arm, and clutching Lord Charles in an affectionate embrace with the other, I managed to get through the ordeal of addressing the audience from what seemed to me mid-air.

Needless to say, Lord Charles was returned, and was good enough to acknowledge my help in the whole-hearted way usual with men who could do their own work successfully without aid from any one.

When I recall these incidents, so full of pleasure and excitement, and seeming importance at the time, and remember how many of those actively concerned in them have passed away, and how often the policy advocated has been forgotten or reversed, the words of Burke involuntarily come to mind, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue !"



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BENCH

SEVENTEEN years after being called to the Bar I was appointed a Judge of the City of London Court and Commissioner of the Central Criminal Court, as colleague to Judge Lumley Smith.

Few things could have afforded me more pleasure than the welcome he accorded to me; and the kindness which he showed me at all times made my position as colleague with so eminent and experienced a judge a very happy one. Our twelve years together were years of unbroken harmony, and for my esteemed colleague I always entertained the most sincere admiration and respect.

When he finally retired from the Bench he did so to my deep regret and against my earnest desire that he should remain, and allow me to lighten his duties by taking a larger portion of the work. Had he been willing to do so, I should have had great pleasure in thus trying to repay, to some small extent, the kindness he had shown to me during the many years of our acquaintance.

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Many people were good enough to assign to me a liberal share of that wit which is assumed to be the natural inheritance of every Irishman; therefore, on the first day when I sat on the Bench a goodly array of reporters appeared in the Court, expecting, as I learned afterwards, to be provided by me with comic items for their papers. Being disappointed they never again deemed me worthy of a visit, and one of them apologised to me for being unable to find anything amusing in the day's proceedings—an inability I fully shared.

Dr. Johnson spoke of pointing a jest by a quotation from Scripture as something a witty man would disdain as easy, and a reverent man as profane. I have always had a similar feeling about joking in a law-court, and would, therefore, as soon cultivate the rôle of a clown at funerals as that of a wit on the Bench.

To me, a Court of Law, either civil or criminal, has always been a solemn place. Apart from the tragic fact that there should exist an habitual criminal class (some of whom, at any rate, might repeat the plea once made by a prisoner in his own defence "God help me, I never got a chance!"), a judge has often to deal with the case of a life wrecked, perhaps, through yielding to one overwhelming temptation, or as the result

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of the evil influence of some one whose power proved irresistible. One cannot but think with pain and sympathy of the shame and sorrow brought to the home and friends of the accused, and also sometimes wonder whether, if all were known, the prisoner would be found to be the most guilty person in the Court.

When listening to evidence I have frequently recalled a comment made by Dr. Robert Esler, Divisional Surgeon to the Metropolitan Police Force, who said that, after thirty years' experience, what had most frequently struck him was the very narrow line which often separated criminals from their more fortunate neighbours.

Mr. Austin, Clerk of Arraignment at the Old Bailey, whose geniality and patience at all times are a model to those who hold similar positions, once asked me if I found it possible, after my daily experience in Court, to retain faith in any one, and I had to confess that it was sometimes difficult; for even in the Civil Court, the perjury, dishonesty, and harshness that are so frequently evident give sad and painful proof of the evil inherent in mankind, and on many occasions I have felt the Old Bailey to be the scene of more tragic drama than was ever presented in any theatre.

Sincere, however, as my sympathy is at times



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with the man in the dock, I feel that the frequent lowering of sentences by the Court of Appeal is very likely to have serious effects, for the temptation to judges of first instance to pass inadequate sentences, and thus guard themselves from the implied accusation of inhumanity or ignorance, which the lowering of their sentences involves, cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, as no sentence, as far as I am aware, has ever been increased by the Court of Appeal (who have not the advantage of seeing the demeanour of the witnesses, or hearing the manner in which the evidence is given), and as the number of those lowered is very great, I consider that the prisoner who does not appeal against his sentence, no matter how light it may be, is very ill advised indeed. This opinion I have frequently heard expressed by others.

Judges, from the moment they reach the Bench, are assumed to know the Law in all its entirety, an assumption which may be classed among legal fictions, and it is a fiction which barristers do all in their power to uphold.

I was specially struck with that fact when I first sat in the Admiralty Division of the City of London Court and also in the Old Bailey.

The great majority of the barristers who appeared before me were able specialists in

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Admiralty Law and practice, and of much experience in that branch with which I, like most judges outside the Admiralty High Court, who have Admiralty cases to try, had previously had but little to do; and I can never forget the kind and skilful way in which they guided me through difficulties, technical or other, yet always implying that my knowledge of the subject was so profound that they were perforce glad to bow to it. In the Criminal Court I experienced the same kindness from specialists in the Old Bailey, when I had to wrestle with objections to that monument of antiquity called an indictment, or deal with other matters of which I had had little or no experience.

On the other hand, judges are generally very tolerant to the Bar, or ought to be.

One often sees a judge listening with apparently deep attention to a barrister who has very little to say that is essential in the case, but most judges remember their own early days and are aware that the barrister is talking for a client who desires quite a long story, and would regard anything else as depriving him of his rights.

It has been suggested that the relationship between the Bench and the Bar should resemble that between father and son, and certainly if all fathers met with the consideration from their



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sons that was accorded to me, with very few exceptions, by every member of the profession who appeared before me in either Court, fathers would have reason to rejoice.

For my own part, I can truthfully say that for young beginners I often felt a solicitude akin to that of a parent who sees his boy set out on some hazardous undertaking, for I knew the struggle that was before them in most cases and the risks they had to face, whilst for those who had not won distinction in this profession, which is so much of a gamble, I had ever the deepest sympathy.

Every one knows that in most walks of life it is not always the ablest who attain success, or the least gifted who miss it, and that in the legal profession what some people call luck has much to do with determining whether a man shall end his life on the Bench or on the shadow side of the Junior Bar.

To this knowledge I attribute not only the lack of jealousy so noticeable in the profession, but also the friendly feeling which usually exists among all its members, and which is one of the pleasures in that most precarious of careers.

It was once pithily said in the House of Commons that the attitude assumed by some men on the Treasury Bench towards the mere private



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member was an attitude which would be “gross insolence if adopted by the Almighty towards a black-beetle”; and I think no one could fail to be conscious of the gulf that an occasional man, on attaining to a position of importance, at once considers to lie between him and his former colleagues.

In such cases there sometimes comes to my mind the recollection of a Donegal farmer who, on being elevated to the magisterial bench, said to an old friend in a moment of great condescension, “You know, Joe, I’ll never expect you to touch your hat to me the more I am a Magistrate.”

I have often been puzzled to know why some men are constantly described as “sound lawyers” and others as knowing no law. May the former reputation be gained on the principle which led Charles Lamb to attribute a Shakespearian intellect to a *vis-à-vis* at an hotel table, who sat silent and absorbed as if engaged in profound speculations, until some peas were placed before him : whereupon he broke the silence with the ejaculation, “Them’s the bullies for me !” ?

It has been said that judges’ tempers sometimes grow shorter with lengthening years. I had not much to complain of on that subject, for only on three occasions during my seventeen

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years at the Bar was I roughly handled by a judge.

On one of these I could not understand the terrier-like treatment accorded to me, but learned afterwards that a white waistcoat which I happened to be wearing had on this judge, at any rate, the effect of a red rag on a bull.

If his lordship had asked me why I came to Court dressed like a mountebank or a buffoon, for so I believe he regarded any deviation from the strictest orthodox attire, I might have thought the question harsh or uncalled for, but the truthful explanation on my part would have been that of Dr. Johnson to the lady who took him to task for his incorrect definition of the pastern of a horse, "Ignorance—pure ignorance."

Of the other rebukes I cannot recall the details, nor do I know how I offended. I only remember the judges who evidently thought I required some chastisement.

All three are dead, but I learned from them to try to avoid giving unnecessary pain to those who appeared before me.

. . . . .

There are but two people who can with impunity attack others—these are the editor in his office and the judge in his Court. And when either (protected as he is) hits those who have

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not a chance to hit back, it is because he is a coward at heart, as the bully ever is.

. . . . .  
In dealing with litigants I very often found that a few words of explanation, which might have been considered quite irrelevant, were most useful, as mitigating what would otherwise have appeared harsh or unjust.

Such an opportunity occurred when I received a letter from the Pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle—a Canadian I believe—who wrote me complaining that he, a very busy man, had been brought to the Old Bailey on a subpœna and kept for five days to give evidence regarding the character of a man of whom he knew nothing, and of whom, so far as he was aware, he had never heard; and that on being told to wait and apply for his expenses, which were considerable, they were refused by me. I replied explaining that it was not in my power to grant his expenses, for that if expenses could be granted when no evidence as to character had been given, a prisoner could have any number of people summoned whom he wished to benefit out of the pockets of the taxpayers; and I further informed him that if he had stated that he knew nothing of the prisoner his attendance would not have been required.



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I had a most courteous reply, which showed that all sense of grievance had been removed.

I mention this incident merely to illustrate the benefit I have often seen to result in Court from a few explanatory words, which might perhaps seem irrelevant to those unacquainted with all the facts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From time to time Judge Rentoul, in common no doubt with other judges, received letters from persons who had been in Court in various capacities. One of these, referring to one of the last bigamy cases tried by him, was as follows.

“*Ealing, W. 5.*

“MY LORD,

“For the first time in my life I was present to-day in a criminal Court.

“I am only a working man. Pardon me for writing to you. I would say I never before conceived what British justice meant. I wish more working men could be got to attend at Court and watch the proceedings as I watched and listened to-day. There would be less dissatisfaction among the working classes. We have always been taught that there is only justice for one class, and that we do not get justice, but law. What I have seen and heard in your Court to-day makes me think and say, ‘Thank God we have judges such as you.’

“Your summing up and your humane sentences on the two men—touched my best feelings.

“Your dealing with that poor woman who was married to an interned German, but had committed bigamy, went straight to my heart, and appealed, I could see, to the best feelings of all in Court. Had your Lordship seen the expression of true thankfulness on the face of that poor woman when she came out of the dock, and on that of the man who had married her, it would have more than pleased you.

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It was my lot to try many bigamy cases, and where the bigamist had ruined a girl's life, and brought shame and sorrow to a respectable family for some brief pleasure or advantage (generally financial) to himself, I always regretted that the law limited my power in the matter of sentence, but where the guilty party had been very sorely tried in the first instance, and had behaved very well in the second case, my sentences were of the lightest.

Any one to whom this may seem blameworthy should consider how inaccessible the Divorce Court is to any but the rich, and yet how it is those of humbler rank and limited means who suffer most severely through an ill-assorted marriage.

One of these bigamy cases which I remember with considerable interest as throwing light on Irish feeling, and on the heat engendered by political differences, arose out of the Howth

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"Thank you, my Lord, and God bless you. You have opened my eyes as to how justice is administered in a British Law Court. I am sorry if I am not in order in writing you, but I write as I feel, and I wish more working men could see and hear such things. You dealt as a man should towards men. They had transgressed, but your punishment was such as to lead them to reform—and I hope it will.

"I remain, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"A——E——y."

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gun-running. The man (English) had married an Irish girl nineteen years before, his first wife being still alive. The second "marriage" also had apparently not been too happy, and quarrels had from time to time taken place, but no hint had escaped the man that his wife was still living, until he said in connection with the Howth gun-runners, "Those fellows ought to be shot like rats." The woman made the very natural reply that they had as good a right to guns as the Ulster gun-runners; whereupon the contention grew so hot between them that the man said: "You are no wife of mine, as I will soon teach you if you carry on such talk."

Further recriminations brought all the facts of the bigamy to light. The woman at once went to the police and through them the wife was found. She was quite willing to divorce her husband and leave him free to marry the injured woman, but as the latter was an Irish Catholic and did not believe in divorce the situation was very complicated. With that side of the question I had, of course, nothing to do, but the whole case threw much light for me on the intensity of the political feeling of the day.

Few things astonish me more than the credulity of the public, from whom very hardly earned



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money can often be so easily abstracted. In one case which I tried, the prisoner had gone through a marriage service with several women, and from one, whom he immediately forsook, he had obtained £1500. The police found at his premises 2700 letters, and in 1914 he was writing to seventy-two women. At least £285 had been traced by references in these letters, and between 1898 and 1906 he had obtained over £1000 from different victims. In 1907 he had "married" a lady of means.

I was fortunately able to give him seven years' penal servitude for bigamy and four years for the frauds. I have always greatly regretted that flogging (without any option being left to the judge) is not part of the penalty for such crimes, as well as for robbery with violence, and certain other offences.

It is unfortunate that, in connection with flogging, an outcry is often raised by people who may mean well when they object to what they describe as "the degradation of corporal punishment" being resorted to; but they are probably unaware that lower degradation than that to which the prisoner has reduced himself is impossible, and that on criminals such as I have in mind a period of imprisonment has no beneficial effect; and being no deterrent is,

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consequently, only a temporary safeguard to the public.

When garrotting had become frequent in London some decades ago flogging was resorted to as punishment for that form of crime, and with excellent effect, and I feel it could be very beneficial to-day in dealing with many of the crimes of violence and outrage which disgrace the country.

There are persons who clamour on every occasion when punishment—severe but necessary for the protection of the community—is being administered, and who profess their reluctance even to hurt a worm. But hurting worms does not pay, otherwise these little invertebrates might have to consider about forming a mutual protection society against these would-be humanitarians. It is such people who, on receiving any injury themselves, are usually the first to cry out for redress, and would attack an offending worm with a Nasmyth hammer.

Passing sentence in cases such as most of those to which I have referred is easy work, but it is far otherwise when the temptation has been great and the verdict of guilty means ruin for life.

I will only refer to one other trial, which I have always remembered on account of a witty appeal sent up to me by the barrister for the

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defence, whose name I am sorry to have forgotten.

The case concerned the theft of horses by a man named S—, who was described by the police as the most expert horse thief in England. The stolen animals were stabled in the yard of a man named C—, who seemed to have no guilty knowledge regarding them. Two other men, W— and L—, were concerned in the matter. The former was apparently very dull and stupid, and the latter—although previously convicted of theft—had had nothing against him for eight years, during which he had earned a living by selling rabbits.

The note sent up to me was—

“C— is old and much respected ;  
W—’s mentally afflicted ;  
L—y has improved his habits  
These eight years by selling rabbits.  
S— is not the least, though last,  
For at his trade he’s unsurpassed !  
And your lordship ought to give  
Such a man a right to live.”

In spite of this poetic effort I was unable to admit the plea.

For the most part the cases tried by me were such as come before every judge, and such as can be heard any day in any Court.

. . . . .



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As old landmarks have always a great interest for me and their removal always causes me regret, I was glad it fell to my lot to try, on March 5, 1907, the last case tried in the world-famed Old Bailey, and in the Court where so many famous judges had sat, and so many famous trials had taken place.

The case was *Rex v. Spear*.

I was accompanied to the Bench by Sir John Pound, Bart. (ex-Lord Mayor of London) and Alderman and Sheriff Sir William Dunn, afterwards M.P. for West Southwark, and Lord Mayor of London.

A sketch of the Bench was made by an artist in Court during the trial, and the picture produced from the sketch was hung in the Royal Academy of that year.

. . . . .

As my public work is now at an end, and an extraordinary amount of limelight has recently been thrown on me, I may refer to the circumstances connected therewith.

A case tried by me was taken in February of this year (1919) to the Court of Appeal, and the verdict quashed, owing to my misdirection of the jury.

Neither in the fact that the case was appealed,

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nor in the fact that the verdict was quashed, was there anything unusual or exceptional, as such things are of frequent occurrence even in cases tried by the most experienced High Court judges.

What was exceptional, and I think unprecedented, was the criticism passed on me by Mr. Justice Darling—the most severe ever known to me as passed by any judge, except on some one guilty of a criminal offence—and conveyed in words certain to be reported in every prominent paper in the United Kingdom.

I had been Mr. Justice Darling's colleague at the Bar and in Parliament, had spoken repeatedly, and to the best of my ability, for him at his contested elections in Deptford, and at this very time I was meeting him frequently at the Old Bailey on, as I believed, terms of friendly intimacy. Under these circumstances I was naturally astounded at his extraordinary outburst; but from the letters which reached me from various quarters, and from many who were unknown to me personally, it was evident that others who were more familiar with his lordship's judicial style were not so surprised.

So exceptional was the censure passed on me that it was not only published next day over the United Kingdom, but equally widely six

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months later, when in July prolonged illness led me to tender my resignation.<sup>1</sup>

On March 6, when I had been absent for some weeks from both the Old Bailey and the City Court, owing to serious illness, the Court of Common Council passed unanimously the following resolution—

“That the attention of the Lord Chancellor be called to the observations of the Court of Criminal Appeal, on February 24, in reference to Judge Rentoul, and that in the interests of justice his lordship be requested in consequence not to include Judge Rentoul’s name in future Commissions for the trial of cases at the Central Criminal Court.”

The gentleman who proposed this resolution had previously so slandered me in the Court of Common Council, on October 3, 1918, that I was forced to place the matter in the hands of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Justice Darling’s words were so remarkable as to be published for a third time on the occasion of the writer’s death in the following August.

No such notoriety was secured for his lordship by Lord Justice Bankes, who presided in the Court of Appeal on April 1, 1919, when a verdict was quashed and a new trial ordered owing to Mr. Justice Darling’s misdirection of the jury. Neither did the Lord Chief Justice (Lord Reading) render his lordship’s misdirection of a jury and the consequent quashing of the verdict in November a *cause célèbre*.



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my solicitors, and obtain a retractation and apology from every paper which, to my knowledge, had published his false and defamatory statements.

One of the accusations made against me on this occasion was : “ The judge has declined to recognise the authority of the Corporation as to what he should do in Court.” This charge, at least, was perfectly true. Not only had I at all times so declined, but both Judge Lumley Smith and I, as well as our predecessor, Commissioner Kerr, repudiated so emphatically any authority over the judges as such, or over the business of the Court, on the part of any one except the Lord Chancellor, that all such claims had been abandoned for some years.

I am not aware of having given any other cause for offence, for I should be reluctant to think that my refusal to give committal orders except on adequate evidence, or my antagonism to the liquor trade had been, as many say, the cause of the ill-will so long and persistently manifested towards me.

Being well aware of this ill-will, it did not surprise me when the Court of Common Council endeavoured in March last to do me a great injury.

What did surprise me was that they should

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not think that even if Lord Birkenhead had been most anxious to gratify the Court of Common Council, and had possessed the power they attributed to him, he might not have cared to inaugurate his accession to the Woolsack by removing a judge from the Bench at the request of any body of men, and still less at the request of openly declared enemies.

John Stuart Mill<sup>1</sup> has fully pointed out the disastrous effect which such a course would inevitably have on the administration of justice.

These incidents are of no consequence to the public, and not of much consequence to me. What is of consequence is that it should be made clear to the public whether or not a body of men whose members appear in the City Court as advocates, litigants, and expert witnesses have an authority over the business of that Court and over the procedure of the judges greater than any Lord Chancellor could claim.

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Representative Government.*

## PART II

### CHAPTER XIV

#### IRELAND : NORTH AND SOUTH

IN dealing with "Ireland : North and South," the first fact which strikes one as requiring to be made clear is the mental, moral and physical equality of Ulster Scot and Southern Celt, and on this subject I think exceptional experience justifies me in offering an opinion.

To many who know the country this truth will appear incontrovertible, but there are others by whom the inferiority of the Celt is asserted with all the appearance of conviction, and the reason is not hard to find.

Is not the desire to justify our actions inherent in us all, and if for centuries grievous wrongs have been inflicted on Catholics, is it not tempting to assert that to racial inferiority was inevitably due the oppression from which they suffered? That Northern and Southern Irish differ radically in many respects is, of course, undeniable, as



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people of different origin, brought up under different circumstances and educated on different lines must, but to ascribe their contrasting traits to distinction of creed is surely to take up an untenable position.

Of the grievous wrongs inflicted on Irish Catholics no one has more honestly recorded the story than a former Unionist member for Dublin University, the late W. E. H. Lecky, who has not tried to palliate these wrongs by any hypocritical theory as to racial inferiority.

As he points out, an injury of the most lamentable and far-reaching kind was inflicted on Ireland through the slaughter or exile of the flower of the race, and by the spirit of lawlessness which the penal code engendered in those who remained in the country; but racial inferiority could no more be attributed to men who were welcomed at the Courts of Madrid, Vienna and Paris, and who became Field-M Marshals and Generals in the armies of France, Spain and Austria, than it could be attributed to-day to that race whose children at school win a full share of honours in open competition; whose sons and daughters gain the highest University distinctions, and whose representatives fill, with credit to themselves and their country, honourable and influential positions both at home and abroad.

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But the satisfaction to conscience produced by the alleged inferiority of the Irish Catholic has been too long indulged in to be easily abandoned, and has been of great service to those who continue to advance the theory.

As I am writing of personal experiences, I may say that although associating intimately with Irish Catholics all my life, and meeting them as companions or competitors in school and at the University, at the Bar and in Parliament, I have never found among them a lower standard of honour, justice, truth, or honesty than among those who are pleased to call them an inferior race, nor have I ever observed any trace of ill-will on their part towards Protestants as such.

When one thinks of Indian affairs, in which Lord MacDonnell played a prominent part; of the Bar of England, of which Lord Russell of Killowen was the acknowledged head; of Parliament, in which there were no abler men than John Redmond and Mr. Thomas Sexton; of Journalism, in which Mr. T. P. O'Connor occupies an unquestionable foremost place, and of the multitude of Irish Catholics who have achieved distinction in every walk of life and in every part of the Empire, it seems as foolish to state that the Irish Celt is the equal of the Ulster Scot, as it would be to offer proofs of the equality of



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Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson, or of Earl Haig and Marshal Foch.

Whether that most senseless of all evil passions—religious bigotry—blinds people to obvious facts, or whether they close their eyes because it pays to keep sections of the community at daggers drawn, one cannot with certainty say.

As there are people who genuinely believe in witchcraft and ghosts and fairy thorns, so there may be others who genuinely believe in the inferiority of men of a different creed, hence the necessity for calling attention to the fallacy.

The experience of many others with whom I have talked coincides with my own, although frequently a rider has been added to the effect, "They [the Irish Roman Catholics] would be all right but for the priests."

On the part of the Catholic Clergy, however, I have never known of any instance of tyranny, injustice, or unfriendliness towards Protestants, even in those districts, or in those circumstances where their power was practically unlimited, and I found that the experience of the numerous Protestant Clergymen with whom I have discussed the subject was similar to mine.

But then, again, a statement is often made that under Home Rule all this would be changed.

Having no desire to assume the rôle of prophet,



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I will merely remark that such a view seems, in the circumstances, somewhat uncharitable. But it is my conviction that it is not merely the credulous and unthinking who fan the flame of bigotry, and keep alive the spirit of hatred and malice between various sections of the Irish people.

This policy has brought many to place and power who would, otherwise, never have emerged from the obscurity for which nature had fitted them.

If that deplorable passion were not encouraged by self-seeking men, the Orange Order would be no more objectionable than the Order of Foresters or Oddfellows, and Patrick's Day parades and Orange processions would be equally inoffensive. Each commemorates a turning point in the history of Ireland, and each might be witnessed without bitterness, and even taken part in by those of opposite creeds, if only the religious element had not been introduced.

I heard the late Lord Russell of Killowen state publicly that he, as a Catholic, could readily participate in the Twelfth of July celebrations, to commemorate the overthrow of a despotic, worthless dynasty which had wrought so much ill to Ireland, and the selection of a statesmanlike ruler, were it not that these celebrations were—and

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were intended to be—exasperating to his co-religionists. That they are known to be exasperating in the highest degree is proved by the fact that they are never organised in those districts where the Catholic population preponderates, and where the processionists would be summarily disbanded.

In an account of the Centenary Celebrations of the Siege of Derry, dated Thursday, December 7, 1788, and preserved in “*Derriana*,” a collection of papers relative to that siege and published in 1794, we read—

“At four o’clock the Mayor and Corporation, the Clergy and Officers of the Navy and Army, the Roman Catholic Clergy, the Gentlemen from the Country, the Volunteers, Citizens, Scholars, Apprentices, etc., sat down to a plain but plentiful dinner at the Town Hall; the toasts were constitutional, and well suited to the occasion; the assembly was necessarily mixt and extremely crowded, the guests amounting to near a thousand persons. Notwithstanding, it was conducted with regularity and decorum; satisfaction and complacency pervaded the whole company. Religious dissensions, in particular, seemed to be buried in oblivion, and Roman Catholics vied with Protestants in expressing, by every possible mark, their

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sense of the blessings secured to them by our happy Constitution, and the cordial part they took in the celebration of this joyful day. . . . Throughout the whole of this business no sentiment was more universally observable than that of love to the Sovereign. The day had scarcely dawned when "God Save the King" sounded from the bells; with the same tune the procession was both received and dismissed at the Cathedral. . . . Thus terminated the Festival—judicious in its origin, respectable in its progress, and happy in its conclusion. . . . No religious animosities, no illiberal reflections on past events, poisoned the general joy and triumph. The genius of Ireland seemed to preside, repressing, in the Protestants, all irritating marks of exultation; and exciting, in the Roman Catholics, the feelings of thankfulness for the deliverance of their persons and properties from the shackles of a lawless and deplorable despotism."

A further reference to the Centenary Commemoration of the Relief of Derry taken from the Ordnance Survey Memoir published in 1837, is quoted in Hempton's "Siege and History of Londonderry."

It runs thus : "1789, August 1st, The Centenary of the Deliverance and Opening of the



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Gates of Derry in 1689 was celebrated in the same spirit of general concord, as that of the Shutting of the Gates in the preceding year. On this as on the former occasion there was a public procession of *all* the citizens to the Cathedral, where they offered up their united expression of gratitude to God the Deliverer. It was marshalled in the following order—

The EARL OF BRISTOL, Bishop of Derry,  
Accompanied by  
DEAN HUME, and a numerous body of the Clergy of  
the Established Church.  
DR. MACDEVITT  
The Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry and several of his  
Clergy,  
The Presbyterian Ministers and Elders,  
The Worshipful the Mayor, THOMAS BATESON, ESQ., with  
The Alderman and Members of the Corporation in their robes,  
accompanied by their Officers,  
The Members of the Commemoration Committee,  
The Londonderry Independent Volunteers,  
etc., etc., etc.

Thus all sectarian and political differences were happily laid aside in the universal rejoicing for the triumph for that civil and religious liberty, a blessing to all which was celebrated on this occasion.”

At what period sectarian dissensions and bitterness in connection with the overthrow of the Stuart dynasty began I do not know, but no one

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can fail to be aware that they are accentuated and kept alive by the annual processions and religious (?) services which are encouraged by men who ought to know better.

About forty years ago, when "The Twelfth" happened to fall on a Sunday, a member of an Orange Lodge in Co. Donegal conceived the idea of asking the Rector of the parish to preach a sermon to Orangemen. This being agreed to, they set out, wearing their regalia. As the procession — numbering twelve — approached the church, there suddenly appeared a crowd of men, who had come from all over the county to prevent this "religious" demonstration. The greatest excitement prevailed; mounted police galloped to Letterkenny for reinforcements, but this was unnecessary, for the Orangemen, on seeing themselves outnumbered, had quickly disappeared. The Donegal Highlanders were not out for the murder of a few helpless men; they merely wished to make a protest on behalf of their own faith, and so effective was it that, so far as I know, no procession, Catholic or Protestant, has ever since taken place in that neighbourhood.

I have very seldom seen an Orange procession, and was present only once at an Orange demonstration. It took place about thirty years ago

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at the residence of the late William Johnston, M.P., the great leader of Ulster Orangeism.

Speeches, satisfactory to ourselves, and apparently appreciated by the audience, were made by several prominent men, but when a youthful curate stood up and asserted with all his force and with every appearance of conviction that one Orangeman could fight and vanquish ten Roman Catholics, on any ground, the enthusiasm was unbounded, and the more temperate speakers realised that the curate alone understood the situation.

On that occasion I recognised that such demonstrations could have no good effect nor serve any good purpose.

Mr. Justice Fletcher, addressing a jury in 1815 and referring to the crime and lawlessness then prevalent, "particularly in the North of Ireland," said, "With these Orange Associations I connect all commemorations and processions, producing embittering recollections, and inflicting wounds upon the feelings of others; and I do emphatically state it as my settled opinion that, until these Associations are effectually put down, and the arms taken from their hands, in vain will the North of Ireland expect tranquillity or peace."

Unfortunately the processions still continue, and still evoke bitter feelings which can probably



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be understood only by those who are familiar with the facts brought out by the Select Committee appointed in 1835 to inquire into Orangeism. The information elicited would greatly surprise those who believe that Order to be law-abiding, unprovocative and religious.

In connection with Orange processions, I recollect hearing of a District Inspector of Police who lived in a town where the Catholic and Protestant elements were about equal, and where "The Twelfth" was looked forward to with as much eagerness as a boxing match or a dog fight, for although rioting was always anticipated, the police were able to quell it before any serious damage was done.

On one occasion the District Inspector announced beforehand that he would not send out his men to be targets for brickbats, and that the combatants could fight to a finish without police interference. As a consequence, no procession took place !

I think it quite possible that if the Government had long ago adopted a similar policy, there might be to-day no "Ulster question" and no Sinn Fein problem.

On different occasions when addressing my constituents, most of whom were probably members of the Orange Order, I put before them my

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view that men should no more be blamed for their creed than for the colour of their hair, as the one was almost as much a matter of inheritance as the other, and added, that although I had known a few instances of both being changed, in no case did the change seem to go to the root of the matter ! The red hair tended always to revert to red, and the change of church produced none of the visible signs of a change of heart, leading men to deal more justly, display more mercy, or walk any more humbly before either God or man.

Such statements were listened to with attention, and though they did not elicit the applause which would have been evoked by perorations alluding to " Our hereditary foes," or " The pious, glorious, and immortal William," one thoroughly respected the men who seemed disposed to give fair consideration to a view to which their attention had probably never before been directed, at any rate from a political platform.

Those, however, who can bear to look at, or listen to, both sides of a question, never make strong partisans. For that rôle I was always handicapped by knowing how very slender were the threads, and accidental the circumstances, which drew all of us into one party or the other.

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Driving to Saintfield at a time when the establishment of a Catholic University was a very burning question, the subject came up for discussion between my driver and me, though I am sure he would have been sorely puzzled to define what a University was, or in what respects it differed from the Colleges of Maynooth or Derry ; but anyhow he was impassioned in his denunciation of it. I agreed with him, saying that I believed it would be a great loss to the Catholics of Ireland. In answer to his questions as to how this could be, I explained that the degrees of a small sectarian University would have little value in Ireland and practically none outside her borders. “And do you mean to tell me it would be bad for them?” he asked. On my replying that such was my belief, he declared, with an emphasis born of long-cherished hate, “Then, by heavens, I’d let them have it !”

This state of feeling, which unfortunately is not limited to the car-driving class, is absolutely incomprehensible to me. I no more understand it than I understand the feeling of the man who on seeing a toad—a harmless and, perhaps, as Shylock said of the cat, a necessary little creature—began to belabour it with all his might, and at each blow of his stick ejaculated, “I’ll larn ye for being a toad.”



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The desire to “larn” men and women for remaining true to the creed taught them from infancy, in spite of (up to the last century, at all events) every worldly inducement to renounce it, is a form of religious zeal with which I have never been fired.

. . . . .

It is a remarkable fact that there are many people in Ulster who have never sat at the table with, or met on equal terms, a Roman Catholic, and who know Catholics, if at all, only as domestic or outdoor servants.

There is a smaller number who would not associate with them even in that capacity, if they could avoid it, and who, when obliged to admit their efficiency and honesty, qualify the admission by saying, “An inferior race always makes the best servants.”

It was in order that the Irish of the North and South might learn in youth to know and respect and like each other that many would have been glad to see them educated together, but since this did not seem satisfactory to the majority of the people, it can only be hoped that the educational system of to-day may tend to mutual good-will and appreciation.

A friend of mine who once conducted examinations in the West of Ireland, asked the boys in a

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country school to contrast the effect of the conquest of Britain by the Romans with that of the conquest of Ireland by the English, and received from one the reply, " When the Romans came to England they found the country barbarous and left it civilised ; when the English came to Ireland they found the country civilised and left it barbarous."

Perhaps in Ulster a totally different view might have been expressed, for unfortunately the history of Ireland was for centuries wholly neglected in the education of the young ; so one party dwells almost exclusively on the glories of Dutch William or the rebellion of 1641, and another almost as exclusively on the massacre at the Gobbins, and the " City of the Broken Treaty." This, no doubt, accounts for the fact that for the settlement of the Irish question, neutral ground is so hard to find.

The introduction of the Intermediate system of education, which has pressed so injuriously alike on teacher and taught, has had at least one good result—it has led to the recognition of Irish history as a subject proper to be taught in the schools of Ireland.

Some years ago a considerable reward was offered for a good elementary history of that country, and the only condition laid down in

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regard to it was that it should "give no offence to either side," or, in other words, that everything should be excluded which might prove unpalatable reading for either Ulster Scot or Munster Celt.

Such a history—if history it could be called—would be as lifeless and wooden as the Shem, Ham and Japhet of a German-made Noah's Ark, or the animals so stolidly indifferent to the flood from which they had miraculously escaped.

Would it have injured the Unionist or Protestant cause if Irish children had received from the legends of Cuchulain, or the Red Branch Knights, the inspiration which English children obtain from the story of St. George and the Dragon, or Arthur and his Knights?

Has it weakened the cause of England or the Empire that the youth of Wales are taught to glory in the deeds of Llewellyn and Owen Glendower, and those of Scotland to take pride in the battlefields of Bannockburn and Stirling, and mourn the fate of the ill-starred Mary Stuart or "Bonnie Prince Charlie"?

Would it not have been to the advantage of England as well as of Ireland if Irish children had been informed of the great part played by their countrymen in the building up of the British Empire? Might they not, with benefit, have been



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told of the loss inflicted on both countries when France absorbed into her army those who won the battle of Fontenoy and wrested from Britain that British flag which now hangs as a trophy over the tomb of Napoleon I?

Had such facts been known, might not Ireland, centuries ago, have ceased to be "the broken arm of England," and have become one of the brightest jewels in the triple crown? Might not every Protestant in Ireland have endorsed the words of George II on seeing his army repulsed by Irish soldiers on a foreign battlefield: "Cursed be the laws that deprive me of such subjects," and might not every Catholic have rejoiced at the part played by his Protestant fellow-countrymen in the building up of this great Empire?

It is told of a man who had lost his way on a mountain top and was wandering helplessly whilst the mists fell, that he saw in the distance what appeared to be a frightful monster; as it approached, the dreaded monster was seen to be a man, and as he came closer still, and the mists had cleared away, the man proved to be his own brother.

The Irish of differing sects and political parties have for centuries seen each other through a mist, in which each has appeared to the other somewhat like a monster.

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I believe closer intimacy and better knowledge would show such points of similarity, and such material for appreciation, as would soon dissipate all fears and make the two races :—

“ Brothers all, from Kerry’s cliffs to Donegal.”

Thomas Davis wrote :—

“ What matter that at different shrines  
We pray unto one God.  
What matter that at different times  
Our fathers won the sod ?  
In fortune and in name we’re bound  
By stronger links than steel,  
And neither can be safe nor sound  
But in the other’s weal.

And oh ! it were a gallant deed  
To show before mankind  
How every race and every creed  
Might be by love combined,—  
Might be combined, nor yet forget  
The fountains whence they rose,  
As fed by many a rivulet,  
The stately Shannon flows.”

Is it too much to hope that even yet some compromise may be effected which will enable the Irish to perform the gallant deed hoped for by that young Protestant poet whose early death was “ deplored by his countrymen of every creed, and every political party ” ?

The qualities so essential to business enterprise and commercial success, in which the Irish Celt (in his own land, at any rate) seems so

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deficient, could be supplied by the Ulster Scot, and he, in turn, could acquire much *joie de vivre* and urbanity, as well as literary and artistic inspiration from his Celtic brother.

This at least was the view put forth in Belfast by the late Judge Shaw—an Ulster man who spent many years as a Judge in Munster, and it is a view with which I am in cordial agreement.

In that masterpiece of careful investigation and unbiased history, *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, the author gives many instances of Catholics who, at the risk, not only of their own popularity and position, but often even at the risk of their life, protected the lives or property of their Protestant neighbours; and also many instances of Protestants who, in those terrible times, acted with equal humanity towards their countrymen of different race and creed. Furthermore, in the struggle to secure justice for the Catholic Irish, there have always been Irish Protestants who took a foremost part, and not only popular political leaders, but such men as Bishop Bedell or Thomas Drummond reaped a rich reward in the devoted attachment of those who would, in certain quarters, be described to-day as their “hereditary foes.”

If in the darkest days which ever dawned in Ireland, many men and women could display



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brotherhood and Christian charity, cannot *all* men and women do so to-day?

Magnanimity, sympathy, reasonable concession and forbearance on both sides would, I believe, bridge over the gulf which has yawned for centuries between the two sections of the nation.

It is in the power of a few men either to encourage the state of affairs which led to the horrors of the eighteenth century, or to bring about the conditions of peace and trust and mutual forbearance which would be in harmony with the religion professed alike by Catholic and Protestant.

Few things can be more false and absurd than the supposition that Irishmen will not work in harmony for their mutual benefit.

When the Stuart dynasty—responsible for so much disaster to Ireland—was overthrown, Catholic and Protestant joined in the rejoicings, and even a century later, as already pointed out, united in celebrating that event.

The entire Irish nation repudiated the circulation of the debased coinage known as “Wood’s ha’pence.”

Catholic and Presbyterian worked together in opposing the Protestant Episcopal ascendancy which excluded both denominations from all

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positions of honour and emolument, and cast every possible slur on their respective Churches.

Protestant farmers, whether "Churchmen" or "Dissenters," were equally eager for Catholic aid in securing better land laws, and it was no uncommon sight to see even a master of an Orange Lodge on the Tenant Right platform side by side with his "hereditary foe."

The Marquis of Londonderry stated in the House of Lords in 1850 that "Orangemen and Roman Catholics have united to obtain a reduction of rent, tenant right, and fixity of tenure; and not only to do that, but to force their landlords by intimidation to accede to their purpose."

When in 1916 the liquor interests seemed in danger, the deputation representing the trade was introduced to the Prime Minister by Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., head of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and Lieut.-Col. Sir James Craig, the foremost Ulster leader of Ireland's Covenanted Orangemen.

In view of such facts as these, can any one suppose that union between Catholics and Protestants is impossible?

To make it difficult, and to represent it as impossible is splendid tactics for those who profit by the dissensions.

Grattan believed the "religious difference"

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bogey to be enormously exaggerated. So does every one who knows Ireland, and so says every one who is not exploiting Ireland for his own advancement.

Archbishop Boulter, writing of a certain policy, said, "The worst of this is that it tends to unite Protestant with Papist, and whenever that happens, good-bye to the English interest in Ireland for ever."

So might many say to-day of their position of power and influence in the event of such a union.



## CHAPTER XV

### IRELAND OF TO-DAY

HAVING always believed that the Union was a benefit to Ireland, and that the desire for Home Rule was based mainly on sentiment, it was my conviction that if by argument, kindness, or appeals of self-interest, we could kill that desire, there was no reason why "The Wearing of the Green," "The Flight of the Earls" or even "Who Fears to Speak of '98?" might not be sung in Unionist circles as enthusiastically as "Scots wha hae," or listened to as readily as the Prime Minister might listen to a recital of "The Bard," in which Gray has so graphically depicted the cruelties inflicted by the English on gallant little Wales.

Had I not thought that the Union was advantageous to Ireland I should never have joined the Unionist party, for "Once an Irishman, always an Irishman" is perfectly true in my case at least; besides, every one knows that England is very well able to do her own work and maintain her own position in the world. She might, however, do it less effectively in war without a

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Roberts, a Wolseley, a French and a Beatty; less effectively in India without a Lawrence, a Nicholson, a Dufferin and a MacDonnell; less effectively across the Atlantic without a Shaughnessy and a Morris; and less effectively in Australia without a Justice Higgins, a Sir William Irvine, or the many others who, though only "mere Irish," have occupied some of the most influential positions in the Commonwealth.

I defended the Union because I believed it was better for Ireland to be a section of a great prosperous Empire than to be a little self-governing country, and because I held the opinion that the Irish had no real or deep desire for Home Rule, and that the claim for it had been used merely as a means towards securing better land laws. This was universally said, and I think genuinely credited, in Unionist circles. Indeed, Lord Charles Beresford in his *Memoirs* expressed in a few words the commonly accepted view when he said, "By demanding a great deal more than they wanted—which they called Home Rule—they got what they did want, which was the land," and from the first day I stood on a political platform till my last appearance on such an unstable erection I held and propounded this view.

In later years, however, a growing feeling in

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favour of Home Rule was evident, and I came to realise the truth of Edmund Burke's statement (in a letter to Lord Charlemont) that "mutual affection will do more for mutual help and mutual advantage between the two kingdoms (Great Britain and Ireland) than any ties of artificial connection." . . . Also that "no reluctant tie can be a strong one, and a natural cheerful alliance will be a far securer link of connection than any principle of subordination borne with grudging and discontent."

. . . . .

In 1912 a new page was opened in Irish politics which renders a continuance of the policy of the past neither desirable nor possible.

A great Demonstration was held in Belfast and a document was then drawn up entitled—

"ULSTER'S SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT."

To associate this name with the 1912 movement was a master stroke in political strategy, for it has proud memories for Presbyterians of Scottish extraction, and was likely to be as useful a watch-word among them as "Remember Orr" would have been a century before when Presbyterians were the under-dog, or as "Remember Limerick" would be to-day in a political movement in the South.



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Furthermore, the terms "Covenanters" or "We men of the Covenant" sound very well; and, greatly daring, I will say, Shakespeare notwithstanding, that in popularising a cause there is a great deal in a name.

The following is the text of the document referred to.

### "ULSTER'S SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT."

"Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V, humbly relying on the God Whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant throughout this our time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland.

"And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us we further solemnly and mutually

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pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority.

“ In sure confidence that God will defend the right we hereto subscribe our names. And further, we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant.

“ GOD SAVE THE KING.”

The Covenant stated in no ambiguous terms that loyalty to the King and Constitution was dependent on concession to the demands of the signatories, for, otherwise, they would found a Republic in the form of a Provisional Government in the northern province, and this fact was emphasised and reiterated by the leading Covenanters. The Covenant was signed, to my knowledge, by many who took it to mean no more than a declaration of their objection to Home Rule in any shape or form, and of their intention to oppose it by every constitutional means, but who would never have signed it had they believed it committed them to civil war, even as a last alternative.

My own conviction is that the Covenant and all that preceded it was merely regarded by the originators as “ bluff.” It was so described to me by one of the foremost of the Larne gun-runners; but when “ bluff ” has attracted the

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attention of the whole English-speaking world, and when the bluffers have called high heaven to witness their sincerity, and have declared themselves ready to shed not only their own blood and that of every one else, but what people hesitate more to talk rashly about—their money—it is not easy to call a halt and say, “The game is ended.”

Shortly after the signing of the Covenant, I arranged with the proprietor of a leading Unionist paper in Ireland to write some articles on the Irish situation, in order to set forth my views on the policy of mutual concession, conciliation and agreement in preference to the policy of the machine-gun. The articles were fully announced in the paper in question and the proofs sent to me, but they never appeared, and I had reason to know they had been submitted to political leaders and condemned by them.

I therefore decided to publish them in pamphlet form, but when they were in type I learned from the printers (Northgate Printing Works, Belfast) that a Liberal club had ordered some thousands of copies, so I suppressed the pamphlet, as this fact caused me to doubt the fairness of merely offering opinions when I was no longer in Parliament, and when it was impossible for me to take an active part against the physical force



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movement. This movement is deplored by many to-day, and possibly even by many still possessed of arms and in the Provisional Government of Ulster.

No life has been sacrificed so far, but when an army was enlisted, and full preparations made for civil war; when every hospital appliance was ready for the relief of those wounded in battle, and a fund of a million pounds guaranteed for providing for the dependants of the fallen, surely the probability of bloodshed and loss of life must have been before the minds of those making these elaborate and costly preparations.

When German guns were landed at Larne and drilling began, it surely meant not only "a rattling of the sword" but a declaration of war, and there is little doubt that the present condition of affairs all over Ireland is the direct and inevitable outcome of the threats and drilling and arming in Ulster.

It is almost incredible that those who held up the police at Larne, cut the telegraph wires, landed German guns at dead of night, publicly dared and defied the British Government, and practically boasted of their "treason," did not foresee the aftermath of "Easter Week" in Dublin, and did not anticipate such words as "What you have taught us we will execute, and

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it shall go hard but we will better the instruction."

Is it not inconceivable that men of such wide experience as those who led the Ulster movement of 1912 can have failed to realise that an example in law-breaking is apt to spread like a prairie fire, especially in Ireland where, as pointed out by such writers as Lecky, Bryce, etc., a spirit of antagonism to British-made law has been engendered in the people through age-long injustice and tyranny? And can they have failed to understand that when Great Britain yields to threats from any country, or any province, or any counties, she has taken the first step towards losing her power at home and prestige abroad?

If the Covenanters of 1912 really believed that under the Home Rule Bill, described in the Covenant as a "conspiracy," their civil and religious liberties would be in danger, what can be thought of those in the strongly Protestant counties of Antrim and Down who are willing to leave the Unionists in Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan, as well as in the South and West, at the mercy of their prospective "persecutors"? Such a desertion would be all the worse in view of the fact that these "unprotected" brethren were induced in many cases to join the Covenanters, not only by the most solemn promises that they would

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never be deserted, but by the appeal to stand by their co-religionists; an appeal which weighed with many who feared nothing from their Catholic neighbours. If, on the other hand, the religious element was introduced for political purposes, what could be more blameworthy? Matthew Arnold says: "Politics are a good thing, and religion is a good thing; but they make a fractious mixture." In no country in the world is this more the case than in Ireland, for nowhere else do politics and what is called religion enter so largely into the life of the people.

If the Covenanters really fear that their civil and religious liberties are in danger, have not the Roman Catholics of East Ulster at least equal grounds for similar fears?

The objections raised in Ulster to any and every form of self-government are, so far as known to me, three in number:

*First.*—"A Dublin Parliament would place all the taxes on Protestant Ulster and would crush Belfast linen manufacture and ship-building out of existence."

Surely it is plain that the fear of such a policy—that of destroying the industries from which so much wealth is derived—is absurd; and does any one seriously believe that the Protestant doctor, or farmer, or business man, or lawyer



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would be taxed on a different scale from his Catholic colleague?

*Second.*—The second objection (from Temperance advocates) is: “The country would be flooded with drink, as most of the publicans are Nationalists and Catholics.”

The reply is obvious. Almost all the leading brewers and distillers are Protestants and Unionists, and without their aid publicans would not be able to carry out the design attributed to them of deluging Ireland in a sea of liquor. Furthermore, the Nationalists in Parliament have, with few exceptions, been among the consistent supporters of Temperance legislation.

*Third.*—The third objection is “They (the Home Rulers) would trample on our religion and degrade our Clergy”; but surely these fears are not seriously entertained even by the wholly ignorant or blindly prejudiced, for not only is religious persecution a thing of the past but experience of Irish Catholics confirms the statement of Lecky, who, in his *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*,<sup>1</sup> writes:

“Among the Catholics at least religious intolerance has not been a prevailing vice, and those who have studied closely the history and

<sup>1</sup> Volume I. p. 410.

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character of the Irish people can hardly fail to be struck with the deep respect for sincere religion in every form which they have commonly evinced. . . . And in spite of the fearful calamities that followed the Reformation it is a memorable fact that not a single Protestant suffered for his religion in Ireland during all the period of the Marian persecution in England. The treatment of Bedell during the savage outbreak of 1641 and the Acts establishing liberty of conscience passed by the Irish Parliament of 1689 in the full flush of the brief Catholic ascendancy under James II, exhibit very remarkably this aspect of the Irish character; and it was displayed in another form scarcely less vividly during the Quaker missions, which began towards the close of the Commonwealth, and continued with little intermission for two generations. . . . The first Quakers suffered much from magistrates and from clergymen, who continually fined and imprisoned them for disturbing public worship, for unauthorised preaching, and for refusing to pay tithes or take oaths. . . . But on the whole few facts in the history of Quakerism are more striking than the impunity with which these itinerant English missionaries, teaching the most extreme form of Protestantism, and wholly unsupported by the civil power, traversed even the wildest and most



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intensely Catholic districts of Ireland, preaching in the streets and in the market places.”

Lecky further states that the experience of Wesley half a century later was very similar, and that he has more than once in his *Journal* spoken in terms of warm appreciation of the tolerance which he encountered almost everywhere among the Catholics of Ireland; and adds that with the exception of the tithe war, which was a species of agrarian contest in which many acts of violence were committed, there was “no feature in the social history of Ireland more remarkable than the almost absolute security which the Protestant Clergy, scattered thinly over wild Catholic districts, have usually enjoyed during the worst periods of organised crime, and the very large measure of respect and popularity which they have almost invariably commanded, whenever they abstained from interfering with the religion of their neighbours.”

This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that probably the nearest approach to religious toleration reached in those days by any other creed was that evinced by Samuel Pepys who, on seeing some Quakers arrested on leaving their place of worship, went home to record in his *Diary* the pious wish which he dared scarcely breathe aloud: “I would to God they would



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conform . . . or be more wise and not be caught."

As to any slight being offered to the Protestant Clergy, can anything be more improbable? Is it not universally known that Irish Roman Catholics have a reverence for Clergy and a respect even for those of a different creed greater than that shown by any other people—a respect which might indeed be copied with advantage by other denominations?

The last objection to any form of Home Rule expressed to me was that of a Belfast merchant who, considering the passing of the Home Rule Bill as inevitable, said, "It's hard to be under them!" That feeling is easily understood. Irish Protestants have too long held rule in Ireland to find it pleasant to take a second, or even equal place in that country; but if we can only hold our position through having Ireland a camping ground for British soldiers, while the British Government is defied and rendered contemptible in the eyes of the whole civilised world, is our position of supremacy one to be proud of, and can it be long maintained?

Not even at the great Ulster Convention of 1892, which was attended by delegates from all over the United Kingdom, was there, in the mind of any one, an idea of armed resistance—at least, so far as

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I ever heard; nor was such a thing even hinted at, at any meeting of Unionists that I ever attended.

The closing words of the Chairman of the Convention—the late Duke of Abercorn—"We will not have Home Rule," became a watchword among Unionists, but I never met any one who regarded that statement as committing us to civil war or war against Great Britain in any contingency whatever.

These words were simply taken to mean, "We will oppose Home Rule by every constitutional means."

The passive resistance to a Dublin parliament suggested on that occasion by the late Rt. Hon. Thomas Sinclair was, so far as I know, the farthest limit of resistance which was suggested by anyone at that great meeting.

Lord Randolph Churchill's statement, "Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right," though quoted with great frequency, was, so far as I know, never regarded seriously even by the keenest Unionists. It was merely used as a political catchword, and I, for one, would never have defended the Union had I believed it would, in any contingency, be maintained by the sword, for a government so maintained is disastrous alike to those who govern and to those who are governed.

It has been well said, "You can do anything

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with bayonets except sit down on them," and neither bayonet nor machine-gun will ever solve the problem of how to secure for the governors of any country peace with honour.

Many of us really believed that the Ulster Convention had "scotched," if not killed, the demand for Home Rule. Wider experience has, however, taught me to attach very little importance to demonstrations however showy, or mass meetings no matter how numerous attended, for I have learned that these depend much more on organisation and excursion trains than on any deep-rooted conviction or enthusiasm for a cause, and that whatever zeal may have existed is more often than not dissipated in the working up of a public display.

Human nature has changed little, if at all, since historians began to record the doings of mankind, and the crowds, which on Sunday cried "Hosanna!" and on Friday, "Crucify!" have their counterpart in every age; and so the man or the party which attaches much importance to demonstrations or popular applause is likely to meet with a very rude awakening.

I have stated the three arguments commonly used against Home Rule. To these I may add the four usually put forth in favour of the Union.

The first argument used during all the years of



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my political life was based on the objection to the interposition of the priest in politics.

This was, and is, a weighty objection, for it is universally recognised that ecclesiastical interference in questions relating to the government of any country is very undesirable; but this objection can never again be put forward in Unionist circles owing to the action taken by the Protestant Clergy of all denominations since 1912. In that year Sir Edward Carson, attended by Colonel Sharman-Crawford, and Lt.-Colonel (now Sir) James Craig, was brought to address the Irish General Assembly at its great ecclesiastical annual meeting, and given an extraordinarily enthusiastic reception, and so widespread was the clerical support accorded by the various Protestant denominations to his party, that a brotherhood, hitherto undreamt of among these sects, became the order of the day.

Not only did Protestant Primates and Bishops, Presbyterian Moderators and ex-Moderators, Methodist Presidents and Vice-Presidents, vie with each other in their eagerness to rally round his standard, but there took place what might almost be described as a miracle of grace, for a minister of the Presbyterian Church (Rev. Dr. Irwin, Moderator of the Assembly) was permitted—for, I believe, the first time since the establish-

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ment of the Church of England in Ireland—to preach from an episcopal pulpit, that of the Belfast Cathedral.

Anniversary services of thanksgiving for Covenant Day became common in many churches. Church premises were available for recording the signatures of those approving of the new movement, and the Protestant Clergy who stood aloof from these things were regarded almost as traitors to their faith. An Ulster Presbyterian minister, who was a Unionist but could not sign the Covenant owing chiefly to its opening sentence, told me that on two occasions shots had been fired into his manse as a protest against his attitude, and similar cases were not unknown.

I have read that the Protestant Bishops of Ulster appointed a special form of prayer with suitable lessons and psalms to be used on the Sunday preceding the first anniversary of the signing of the Covenant; and at political meetings that most inspiring song of praise, beginning

“O God, our help in ages past,”

was used to such a degree as to reduce it to the level of a mere party tune.

The objection, therefore, to the priest in politics is one that can no longer be urged by those striving for the maintenance of the Union.

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Our second great argument in favour of the Union was summed up in one sentence: "We will never desert our brethren in the South and West." But our brethren in the South and West, as well as in the "unprotected" parts of the North, have been deserted; indeed, they would be justified in saying they have been sold and betrayed.

The third argument was, that under Home Rule aid could be given on the south and west coasts to a foreign fleet desiring to invade England; but in view of modern warfare by aeroplane and submarine, the danger from a sullen and antagonised neighbour is infinitely greater than it would ever be from a contented people managing their own local affairs, and possessed of sufficient common sense to know that friendly relations with Great Britain, which is, and ever must be, her best customer, are most desirable.

The fourth and last argument used by all speakers on the Unionist side was that we must never break up the Empire by granting a Parliament to Ireland.

I think it was Mr. Balfour who said "never" is a word which no one should employ in politics, and it is possible we may have to drop this last remaining plank in our platform, owing to the



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rapidly growing feeling in favour of the rights of small nationalities; but since there are, I believe, already twenty-four Home Rule Parliaments in the British Empire, including those of the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles, I think we were wrong in assuming that a twenty-fifth must have the disastrous results we feared. At any rate it is impossible to suggest any greater dismemberment of the Empire than the setting up of a sort of independent republic in East Ulster in the form of the provisional government so fully outlined by the Covenanters, from whom there came threats that they would never again sing "God Save the King," but would invite another William—William of Hohenzollern—to come over and send George of Windsor packing, unless ruled as they desired.

Mr. Redmond-Howard in *The New Birth of Ireland* states that injustices or inequalities in treatment are noted by Celtic Ireland with the precision of a lawyer's clerk. That being so, the words of Lord Bryce are no doubt occasionally reflected on to-day. He says :—

"The dominant caste, which had gone to the verge of rebellion in 1782, called itself loyal when, in 1798, the subject race followed the example which the volunteers had set. This caste has since then professed attachment to the English

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Crown. Its attachment has not been disinterested. Doth a man serve God for naught? The Protestant Ascendancy had solid reasons for adhering to the power which maintained it as an ascendancy.”<sup>1</sup>

Sir Ralph Abercromby (whose policy is expressed in his own words: “God grant that the measures on the affairs of Ireland, which are under consideration, may be well weighed, and that the spirit of party may give way to true wisdom”) was driven by a cabal against him to resign his position as Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, and General Lake was appointed in his stead.

Lake’s policy is set forth in a private letter to Pelham, the Chief Secretary. From this letter the following extract is taken: “I much fear these villains will not give us an opportunity of treating them in the summary manner we all wish. You may rest assured they will not have much mercy if we can once begin. . . . Belfast ought to be proclaimed and punished most severely, as it is plain every act of sedition originates in this town . . . nothing but terror will keep them in order.”

Doubtless these words, too, are noted with precision, as well as the statement of Edmund

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. xxx.

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Burke that the rebellion of 1641 was as provoked as it was afterwards absurdly misrepresented.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

Dwelling on a long-vanished past is said to be the chief occupation of Celtic Ireland.

It is told of Martin Haverty, the Irish historian, that being found once in a state of burning indignation, he explained that he had been reading an account of the sufferings inflicted on his ancestors. When asked, "Can you not forget the wrongs of Strongbow to the Milesians?" he replied, "It is not the wrongs of Strongbow to the Milesians, but the wrongs of the Milesians to the Tuatha de Danaans, that I can neither forgive nor forget."

Unfortunately ancient wrongs, too long undressed, rankle as deeply in the minds of some Irish Catholics to-day as they did in the heart of Haverty, and although many evils have undoubtedly been met by legislation, is it to be denied that there are still causes for bitterness and distrust?

Among the causes of bad feeling to-day, as well as in the past, I count the annual unchivalrous Orange celebration of a two-hundred-year-old victory in the face of the descendants of the vanquished, and the retention, until the

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke*, Vol. I. p. 337.



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accession of our present sovereign, of an offensive clause in the Coronation oath.

If Germany, after the Franco-Prussian War had devastated France, enacted such inhuman penal laws as forced most of her energetic and ambitious people into voluntary exile—banned the religion of the nation and seized the cathedrals for Lutheran worship—closed to the people every avenue to honourable and lucrative work—massacred the French aristocracy or driven them into exile—handed over their estates to German adventurers or the impecunious members of Junker families—and if the Germans continued to celebrate annually in France with bands and flags and speeches and processions the capture of Strasburg and the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine: would any one in this country assume that the French had no grievance? Would any one think it strange if they occasionally said, “Germany’s extremity is our opportunity”?

But are there not more tangible grievances still?

I yield to no one in recognition of Sir Edward Carson as a most eminent advocate—as a man of striking personality and great ability, and possessed of qualities which specially fitted him to lead such a movement as arose in East Ulster in 1912; but no one can assume for a moment that before

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that time he was a prominent or influential statesman.

His enormous practice at the Bar rendered such a thing impossible. Yet inside six years from the drawing up of the Ulster Covenant, and of his announcement in Parliament that he was going over "to break every law in Ireland," he was appointed Attorney-General for England and First Lord of the Admiralty—the latter position being one which was described by Lord George Hamilton, who had previously held it, as "The blue ribbon of office."

No one can attach less importance to extravagant utterances on a political platform than I do, for I am too well aware that no man, and especially no Irishman, will ever be an effective speaker who is not often led by the enthusiasm of his audience, or the excitement produced by large crowds, into using words which he would never have uttered if he had expected them to be taken literally, or to bear evil fruit; and there are probably very few public speakers who have not repented at leisure of words spoken in haste when they saw them in cold print next morning. But deliberately written statements, or utterances in Parliament on momentous occasions, or a carefully drawn-up manifesto are quite different matters, and no one could suppose



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Sir Edward's words to be anything but well considered, or to mean anything less than a distinct threat to the Government.

Mr. F. E. Smith, one of Sir Edward Carson's few rivals at the English Bar, followed him to Ulster and joined the fighting force as "Galloper." This was equivalent to an additional battalion in the Ulster army, for Mr. Smith, now Lord Birkenhead, was recognised as a very clever man, who, in all his brilliantly successful career, had never made any miscalculations; therefore many, who were previously in doubt as to what course it would be wisest to pursue, concluded that it would be very wise indeed to follow his lead.

The Nationalists also agreed that he was extremely clever, and never more so than when he crossed to Ireland to join in the policy of defying an intimidated British Government.

They believed that, as a student of history, he well knew that, where Ireland was concerned, England yielded—as Macaulay pointed out—always and only to the mailed fist.

Mr. Smith's progress upward after his enlistment in the Ulster army was even more meteoric than Sir Edward Carson's, for inside six years he was made Lord Chancellor of England, at an earlier age than any man since Judge Jeffreys of hanging fame, whilst the Irish Roman Catholics



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who followed the lead given in Ulster were imprisoned, exiled, or shot.

To expect the "mere Irish" after happenings such as these to be a law-abiding, England-loving race is surely to live in a fool's paradise.

Some poems on Ireland, together with Scott's "Breathes there a man with soul so dead?" were excluded from Irish school-books and replaced by one in which the refrain was "Make me a happy English child"! Was that any more imbecile than to imagine that Nationalist or Catholic Ireland would calmly see her leaders imprisoned, outlawed, or executed, for pursuing a line of action similar to that which won for men in the North the highest honours and emoluments in the power of the British Government to confer?

There is perhaps nothing in the world more infectious than successful defiance of authority, and to set an example of it amid a population where such defiance has been regarded for centuries as the highest patriotic virtue has seemed to me a proceeding full of danger not only to the peace of Ireland, but to the stability of the Empire.

How great the danger is can only be understood by those who know that the cruel and criminal element which exists in every country and in every community comes at times to the

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surface, and that when it does so in Ireland it has almost invariably taken the form of political or agrarian outrage.

Sir Edward Grey in 1914 said, "The one bright spot in the very dreadful situation is Ireland."

John Redmond, risking what men in public life are least willing to risk, did all that man could do to help in Britain's and Europe's "dreadful situation."

Unfortunately England in the hour of extremity disregarded his advice and took no heed of his opinions or wishes, except to thwart them. This great statesman, without a single title to confer, or a single office to give away—and with a people behind him poor in cash, but poor in nothing else—had brought his countrymen round to relying on constitutional measures rather than on violence, defiance and outrages. He had kept together a somewhat difficult party for over twenty years, and knew Ireland as perhaps no other man of this generation knows it. He was held in high esteem even by his Ulster opponents, and was gaining recruits for the British Army at a surprising rate: yet his suggestions as to how best to continue this result had no more weight than if they had been the pronouncements of a school-boy. Thus at a turning-point in the history of the two countries the wrong road was once

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more taken, and Ireland, which in 1914 was "the one bright spot" on the British horizon, is now a dark, thunder-laden cloud.

Redmond died a heart-broken man, and he lost his life in the service of the Empire as surely as his brother lost his in the firing-line at Messines. He declared himself ready to meet in the fullest manner the rights of Protestant Unionists, and to secure for them every safeguard which could be reasonably suggested, and more than their proportionate share of representation in an Irish Parliament.

If I remember rightly, I think he would have agreed to county option. Could any one consider such a settlement unfair? Personally, I would concede even more, and say, "If there are those who consider life not worth living under any but an English Parliament, pay full compensation to such for removing bag and baggage across the water," and I venture to say the calls on the British Exchequer would be extremely few.

Hopeless as seems the outlook at present, I will, nevertheless, quote the following words of Major "Willie" Redmond when home from the trenches for the last time—white-haired and war-worn—and making his last appeal in Parliament on behalf of his country.



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“I do not believe there is a single member of any party in this House who is prepared to get up and say that in the past the government and treatment of Ireland by Great Britain have been what they should have been. Mistakes, dark, black and bitter mistakes, have been made. A people denied justice, a people with many admitted grievances, the redress of which has been long delayed. On our side, perhaps, in the conflict and the bitterness of the contest, there may have been things said and done, offensive if you will, irritating if you will, to the people of this country; but what I want to ask, in all simplicity, is this, whether . . . it is not possible on your side, and on ours as well, to let the dead past bury its dead, and to commence a brighter and a newer and a friendlier era between the two countries? Why cannot we do it? Is there an Englishman, representing any party, who does not yearn for a better future between Ireland and Great Britain?

. . . . .  
“I may have been as bitter and as strong in the heated atmosphere of party contest against my countrymen in the North as ever they have been against me, but I believe in my soul and heart here to-day that I represent the instinct and the desire of the whole Irish Catholic race

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when I say that there is nothing that they more passionately desire and long for than that there should be an end of this old struggle between the North and the South.

“As far as my own personal opinion goes, there is nothing I would not do, and there is no length to which I would not go, in order to meet the real objections or to secure the real confidence, friendship, and affection of my countrymen in the North of Ireland. . . .

. . . . .

“After all, these are times of sacrifice, and every man is called upon to make some sacrifices. Men, women and children alike have to do something in these days, and is it too much to appeal to the right honourable gentleman and his friends to sacrifice some part of their position in order to lead the majority of their countrymen, and to bring about that which the whole English-speaking world desires, namely, a real reconciliation of Ireland. . . .

“In the name of God, we who are about to die, perhaps, ask you to do that which largely induced us to leave our homes . . . to do that which is all we desire : make our country happy and contented, and enable us, when we meet the Canadians and the Australians and the New

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Zealanders side by side in the common cause and the common field, to say to them, 'Our country, just as yours, has self-government within the Empire.' ”

The first step towards this ideal must be the abandonment of all party processions.

If I remember rightly, it was reported by a Royal Commission of Inquiry regarding disturbances in Derry in 1869, due to exasperation caused by Orange demonstrations, that the Catholics were willing to accept a general prohibition of party processions. May it not be hoped that the Protestants would acquiesce in this prohibition? The voluntary abandonment of these would be greatly to the honour of all concerned.

The good feeling between Protestants and Catholics in all parts of Ireland where these processions do not take place is notorious. Will not the party which first discontinues them secure the approval of all?

Belfast and Derry have had many riots. Have they ever led to permanent good to any cause or to any creed, and have any but the very poor ever lost their lives in them? In riots which may now be provoked it is only the blood of artisans and labourers in the back streets that will be shed, only the poorest and humblest of



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homes that will be left desolate. If one life is lost on the bare suspicion of religious persecution, will it be possible for any one who helped to fan the flame of that fiercest, most cruel and most unreasoning of passions, the passion of sectarian bigotry, to exonerate himself from participation in the guilt of murder?

Highly placed and influential people have always been found associated with party demonstrations. When the rioting occurred which these demonstrations inevitably provoked, one never heard of the highly placed men and women being in or near the danger zone. Not only were they outside the firing-line, but they seldom ventured even within sound of the guns.

Is it hopeless to suggest that party processions of every sort should be voluntarily abandoned, and their place taken by one great, united procession, honourable and inspiring to every Irishman of whatever class, creed, or politics?

The annual procession I have in mind might commemorate the abandonment of all party strife and faction bitterness, and the dawn of that day when all began to work in harmony for the good of Ireland, of the Empire, and of the world; or it might commemorate that union of hearts which touched us all when we read of Ulster Volunteer and Munster Fusilier fighting as comrades and

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dying as brothers in Flanders in defence of the liberty of the world.

Can the people of East Ulster not be led to remember that the British Empire has been built up by a twofold course—war and compromise, and that compromise, when honourably possible, is always the better way?

Can the people of the rest of Ireland, whose wrongs, recent or age-long, are fully admitted, not try to forget, or at least forgive, these wrongs, and realise that to belong to an Empire which the Irish Catholics have done so much to build up is a heritage which should not be lightly flung away?

The Duke of Wellington stated that of the troops who fought under him in the Peninsular War, at least one half were Roman Catholics.

Of them he said :—

“ Your lordships are well aware for what length of period, and under what difficult circumstances, they maintained the Empire buoyant upon the flood which overwhelmed the thrones and wrecked the institutions of every other people; but they kept alive the only spark of freedom which was unextinguished in Europe. . . . We must confess, my lords, that without Catholic blood and Catholic valour, no victory could ever

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have been obtained, and the first military talents might have been exerted in vain.”

Such facts as these should be remembered by those who regard “the mere Irish” as their hereditary foes.

I am aware of the difficulty of advocating such a course—aware that no independent thinker in politics, and no one who admits the possibility of right or justice existing amongst his opponents, is at all likely to escape the charge of being a turncoat or a trimmer. Turncoats, however, may be among the best or the worst of men—it all depends on what led to the sartorial alteration; and any one who fears the charge of inconsistency or trimming can take heart of courage from the words of Edmund Burke to Lord Rockingham in reference to what he was led to believe were wrongs in India. “It is obvious,” he wrote, “that when we have no (personal) interest one way or other in the point, we might be allowed, without any suspicion of deserting our principles, to alter an opinion upon six years’ experience, if six years’ experience had given us reason to change it.”



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CHURCH AND THE LIQUOR TRADE

EARLY in life I was interested in the Temperance question, but my interest was merely inherited, as I knew nothing of the drink evil in all its tragic reality. I had not then had a scholar of my University call on me time after time to ask for a few shillings, nor had I seen a former fellow-student, who had occupied an influential position in the Church, end his days as a scavenger in the London streets, whilst his wife, also a drunkard, wheeled a vegetable barrow through the slums, nor had I known another to die in the workhouse of the parish in which he had once been an honoured minister. I had never seen women lying helplessly drunk in the streets until picked up and taken on a barrow to the nearest police station; and I had not learned that such leaders in the medical profession as Sir Andrew Clarke, Sir Victor Horsley, Sir Benjamin Richardson, and others of equal eminence, had pronounced alcohol to be a racial poison, or that the greatest judges in the kingdom had attributed

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from eighty to ninety per cent. of the crime of the country to drink.

When face to face with any great evil it is useless to deplore it unless there is a possibility of remedying it, and hitherto the remedies applied have proved at best only very temporary palliatives. Even the world-renowned Father Mathew saw his great work fall to pieces in his own lifetime, and stated that by restrictive legislation alone could any permanent improvement be effected. Others have recognised this truth, and from his day onwards attempts have been made to control the liquor trade, but practically without success.

How, then, can success be attained? Is not the answer given in the words of John Bright when he said, "Temperance Reform can be got by the ministers of religion and the good people who listen to them from week to week; without their zeal and co-operation it is hopeless and a dream"; and similarly when a clerical deputation waited on the late Lord Salisbury to urge the necessity for Temperance legislation, his reply was that it was the Clergy themselves who could secure the desired reform.

The late Sir Andrew Reed, K.C.B., head of the Royal Irish Constabulary, writing prior to the 1906 general election on the necessity for a

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change in the licensing law, and after forty-one years' experience as a police officer in Ireland, said: "It is only through Parliament we can effect our object, and it is mainly through the Members of Parliament representing Ireland we can influence Parliament. . . . The Clergy of all denominations of the Christian Churches are the legitimate leaders in such a movement, affecting as it does religion and morality."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Lloyd George summed up many appeals for clerical support when, in Merioneth, on September 25, 1906, he said: "An alliance of the Christian Churches against drink and social injustice would dominate and direct legislation. No influence, no monopoly would stand against it."

The power of the Clergy is fully understood by the liquor trade. Hence the donations to the Church, and hence such incidents as that reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of September 13, 1907, when £1000 was offered to the Rev. C. P. Wilson, M.A., Vicar of Weaste, if he would abstain from opposing at the Brewsters' Sessions the grant of a licence to a public-house in his parish.

Individual Clergy here and there have done heroic service in the Temperance cause, and often

<sup>1</sup> *The Temperance Problem and the Licensing Laws of Ireland*, pp. 3 and 5.



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at the sacrifice of their own popularity and promotion, but individual effort is of no avail against a great monopoly organised with the precision of a Prussian regiment; and no Church has in its corporate capacity taken up an attitude of antagonism to "The Trade." Quite the contrary, for, as was stated through the Press Association, it was admitted in the House of Commons that the Church of England owned, in 1906, 332 public-houses, and had in the preceding fifteen years renewed leases to over sixty of these, involving a rental of over £11,000 a year.

The excuse offered for this state of affairs is that the Church property is managed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; but *Whitaker's Almanack* states the Commissioners to be sixty in number, of whom eighteen are laymen, and the remaining forty-two consist of the two Archbishops, thirty-seven Bishops and three Deans!

In opposing the 1908 Licensing Bill, Lord Halsbury gave as one of his reasons for doing so the fact that the investments of the Clergy in three London breweries (which, he said, might be regarded as typical) amounted to £68,232.

Liquor traders seem to vie with one another in the desire to build and embellish Churches of all denominations, for the principal Presbyterian Church in Dublin was built by Alexander

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Findlater; Christchurch Cathedral was restored by Rowe the distiller; St. Patrick's Cathedral was restored by the founder of the Guinness brewery, and continues to owe much of its maintenance to Lords Ardilaun and Iveagh, to whom gratitude is shown by the dedication in perpetuity of pews to the family, and by the erection of a bronze statue of Sir Benjamin Guinness near the south door of the Cathedral. Can any one doubt that the success of Dublin's Church-building liquor firms accounts for the Recorder's description of that city in 1904 as "A sink of publicanism and saturated with drink," and for the statement of Lord Aberdeen, when Viceroy, that in 1901 the census showed one-fourth of the entire population to be living in one-room tenements—with an average of five or more occupants in each room?

It is told of an American tourist that when driving past Rutland Square Presbyterian Church he inquired of his "jarvey" what it was called, and was told "St. Findlater's," the name often given to it in derision by those who believed there should be no connection between a distillery and a church.

Finding that some school-buildings bore the same name, and seeing that name over a great liquor store, the American asked if all three establishments were founded by the same person. On



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receiving an answer in the affirmative, he said :  
“ You are a truly remarkable people : you get education, salvation, and damnation through the same firm and from the same person.”

Even the Divinity Schools have profited largely from the gifts of liquor traders. In those connected with the Irish Presbyterian Church are many scholarships bearing the name of the founder of the Findlater distillery ; and as late as 1909 a grant was accepted by the McCrea Magee College in Derry from the head of the Guinness brewery.

Apart from their business, those connected with the liquor trade are in no respect inferior to other members of the community, but when crime and tragedy are its inevitable accompaniments, they must be judged by their occupation and not by their social or civic activities.

Many liquor traders to my knowledge deplore their occupation, and for those born to an inheritance in that trade, and lacking the courage of soul of a Charrington or of others who, though in a lesser position, renounced their inheritance, sympathy must be felt. Of those who voluntarily participate in it, either passively as shareholders or actively as traders, it is probable only a very small minority would have done so had the ban of the Church been placed upon it.



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I do not know the facts regarding the connection of the various other Churches of the United Kingdom with the liquor traffic, but I have no reason to doubt that they are also beneficiaries—at any rate their apathy is very significant.

It may be asked what would have been the feelings of the nation had it been discovered that some of our principal forts were built by Germany, that many of our officers were large shareholders in the Krupps Factory, that our naval cadets were educated by funds supplied by Von Tirpitz, and that scholarships founded by Count Zeppelin were handed out annually in his name to our young airmen? Yet such is the position of affairs between the Christian Church and that trade described by the *Daily Telegraph* as “A covenant with sin and death”; by *The Times* of Dec. 7, 1853, as “An infinite waste and an unmixed evil”; by that same paper, ten years later (January 19, 1863), as producing “more idleness, crime, disease, want, and misery than all other causes put together”; and by the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church as “subversive of the fundamental principles of Christian morality.”

I state these facts with the greatest reluctance, and only in the hope of attracting attention to a state of things which must be remedied as much

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for the sake of the Church as for that of the Temperance cause; and various Clergy have in the past done their utmost to bring similar facts before the public.

Dean Farrar and Dr. Hicks (the late Bishop of Lincoln) in their "Lees and Raper" lectures have made many statements and given many quotations regarding the evil results of the liquor trade—statements which, if coming from the ordinary lay temperance advocate, would be scouted as blind fanaticism or an indication of aversion to the Church. Dean Farrar quotes Professor Huxley as saying that "after living for years in the East End of London he had travelled all over the world, and that he would distinctly prefer the life of a savage to that of an East Ender"; and the late Sir George Grey said "that he had seen more squalor and degradation during a few days in London than he had seen during the long years of his life spent without a break in contact with heathens and savages."

Sir Henry Layard, describing the "decency, cleanliness and happiness" found in a town on the Euphrates, said, "It was because there were no Christians, and therefore there were no grog-shops."

In view of statements such as these it is not strange that Dr. Thorold, Bishop of Winchester,



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should have said many years ago that “ Unless the Church would set herself to work to stem the tide of intemperance . . . they—the Clergy—might save themselves the trouble of building churches, organising missions, and sending out people to preach the Gospel, as there would be no moral soil on which to cast the seed of the Gospel.”

Nothing is more remarkable than the adherence of the Church to the use of intoxicants at the Lord’s Table, for whilst every indisputable circumstance in connection with the Last Supper has been reversed, Church Courts insist that by alcoholic liquor alone can that Sacrament be worthily celebrated, although no efforts have succeeded in proving that “ the fruit of the vine ” was an intoxicant.

Why has not unleavened bread been equally insisted on? Is it because the makers of unleavened bread have never been in a position to endow Churches?

The objection to the use of intoxicants at Communion was effectively dealt with years ago by Dr. F. R. Lees, Dr. Dawson Burns, and various Clergymen of the Irish Presbyterian Church, and quite recently by Rev. Henry Fraser, Liverpool, and Rev. George Denyer, Blackburn, in a pamphlet entitled *The Permissive Use of Unfermented*



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*Wine in the Holy Communion.* In this pamphlet an appeal is made to the Archbishop of York for permission to celebrate Holy Communion in non-intoxicating wine, but notwithstanding the powerful arguments contained in it in favour of the unfermented "fruit of the vine," I understand the permission sought for has not been granted.

So strongly has the use of intoxicants at the Communion Table been insisted on by all Church Courts that not only in every Temperance Bill in this country, but in the prohibition laws across the Atlantic, a clause has been inserted permitting the sale of alcohol "for religious purposes!"—a circumstance which will doubtless appear as strange in the next century as it would seem to us if, when slavery was abolished, a permit had been granted to the Churches to retain slaves for washing the surplices or ringing the bells.

It was estimated some thirty years ago that the annual amount paid to the public-house for wine "for religious purposes" amounted to about £70,000 a year.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Hicks), in his lecture already referred to ("The Church and the Liquor Traffic"), used these words: "If the nation, wearied with the curse of drink, awakes like some angry giant and flings off the incubus of the trade by a purely secular and civic agitation,

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then the apathy of the Church in this great moral conflict will have inflicted upon religion and upon Christianity a disgrace and a backset from which it may take generations to recover."

There are many hopeful signs that the apathy referred to by Dr. Hicks is being recognised and combated.

In Manchester, where his influence was very great, it has been decided by the Dean and Canons of the Cathedral that no facilities shall be given in future for any licences on the lands held by the Chapter, an arrangement by which, as stated in the *Alliance News* of February 11, 1909, something like £30,000 was renounced. This self-denying ordinance is the more creditable, as the revenue, after providing for the upkeep of the Cathedral staff, was used for the much-needed augmentation of the salaries of the Clergy in and around Manchester.

When some Clergymen began to take an active part in supporting local option, "The Trade" declared the intention of withholding all subscriptions to Churches and the charity organisations connected therewith, and when, in 1908, a number of the Clergy advocated the passing of the Licensing Bill, not only was a withdrawal of subscriptions to Churches and the charities connected with them announced, but the National



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Trade Defence Association flung down the gauntlet with the following words : “ Let us, in the fight for justice, demolish the Free Church Council and devastate every Dissenting Chapel rather than suffer this injustice.”

To these threats the answer from many of the Clergy was concise and emphatic. Archdeacon Wilberforce, preaching in Westminster Abbey, said :—

“ I would sooner see the Cathedrals rot on the ground than that they should be built by the colossal fortunes that have been raised by the drinking idiocy of the English people.”

The Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. Chavasse) said : “ I could not accept a farthing from a man whose fortune was made out of the misery and degradation of our great slum parishes.”

Archdeacon Emery said : “ We must do without the brewers’ gold ; they give it to us to win credit for their trade.”

The Bishop of Hereford, speaking at a great demonstration in Manchester in favour of the 1908 Licensing Bill, said in reference to the withdrawal of subscriptions : “ The Church of England is not out for sale.”

The Bishop of Sodor and Man, at a meeting in Lambeth Palace on May 5, 1914, said : “ The Church of England has no right to any partner-



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ship with the liquor trade. She ought to wash her hands of all financial interest in the drink traffic. . . . For the Church must abhor the conspiracy of silence. We must refuse to close our lips in order to open the purses of the brewers."

The Bishop of Stepney and many other Clergymen have spoken in the same terms; and so steadily is the objection growing to receiving money avowedly given as the price of silence that a legacy for mission work which consisted in part of two public-houses was declined a few years ago by the Irish Presbyterian Church.

It is late—but not too late—for the Clergy of the united Christian Church to take the lead, and play their proper part in that conflict which will free the nation from the incubus of the trade—but if they are to do any honourable or effective work they must renounce absolutely the brewers' gold. In the words of the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church, they must "separate themselves from the liquor trade, *both as regards moral support and financial interest*," and use their great influence for the return to Parliament of those only who will join with them in the endeavour to save the nation from the curse of drink.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE STATE AND THE LIQUOR TRADE

THE liquor trade was established in this country by Parliament, and the licensing laws can be altered only by Parliament, or by a revolution.

The evils inseparably connected with the drink traffic are so well known and so universally admitted as to render any reiteration of them unnecessary, but it may be well to quote the words of a few leading men on the subject before referring to the remedial measures which the state of the country demands.

Gladstone described drink as involving evils "worse than war, famine and pestilence combined," and his son, Lord Gladstone, when Home Secretary, stated: "Of my own knowledge and experience, crime is almost inseparable from it."

Lord Rosebery spoke of "The Trade" as one which, if not destroyed, would destroy Britain, and Mr. Balfour summed up the effects of it as "An ever-present tragedy."

In April 1908 Mr. Asquith described the liquor trade as one "which in its modern development and organisation constituted, in the opinion of

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social reformers, one of the greatest menaces to the well-being of the nation at large," and in 1907 Mr. Lloyd George, when speaking at Pontypridd, described it as "The cruellest tyranny that ever oppressed the people," and, later, as "The great recruiting sergeant of the unemployed army—with its press-gang of public-houses."

From the Bench comes equally strong denunciation. At Durham in 1883 Lord Brampton said: "I believe that nine-tenths of the crime committed in this country, and certainly in this county, is engendered within the doors of the drinking-house," and at the Liverpool Assizes on April 2, 1892, Lord Chief Justice Coleridge stated that "At a moderate estimate something like nineteen-twentieths of the crime that has to be tried in Courts is due to drink."

In 1908 the Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) gave as his opinion that "If the drink mischief could be effectively dealt with, seventy per cent. of the social evils of the country would settle themselves," and Lord Chief Justice Alverstone, when speaking at the International Congress on Alcoholism in London in 1910, said: "My experience of forty years at the Bar and ten on the Bench compels me to declare that ninety per cent. of the crime of the country is due to drink."

Leaders in the medical profession have no



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hesitation in speaking of the physical evils of alcohol which was described by Sir William Gull, physician to Queen Victoria, as "the most destructive agent we are aware of in this country," and "a most potent cause of disease," and by Sir Frederick Treves, surgeon to King Edward VII as "distinctly a poison which has, like other poisons, such as opium, arsenic and strychnine, certain uses. The limitation of the use of alcohol should, however, be as strict as the use of any other kind of poison." Sir Andrew Clark said: "Alcohol is a poison . . . health is always in some way or other injured by it," and Sir William Thompson, whose name had been unwarrantably used by an Australian wine company, wrote: "I have never in the whole course of my life spoken of any wine as 'nourishing,' and I regard such a term as inapplicable. . . . I have done the most laborious work of my life, have indeed only been enabled to do it, by abstaining from any form of fermented liquor."

Sir Arthur Chance stated at the National Catholic Temperance Congress (1914) that "no belief is more widely held and no belief has been more effectively disproved than that alcohol gives strength to the weak," an opinion endorsed by Sir Victor Horsley, Dr. Saleeby and hosts of other leading scientists.

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What is the evidence from the Army regarding alcohol? "The great Duke of Wellington when asked by Lord Wharncliffe in a parliamentary Commission 'Is drink in your opinion the great cause of all crime in the British Army?' replied, 'Invariably.'"

General Havelock described two occasions in which it had nearly shipwrecked the fortunes of the British Army. Lord Napier said: "Of 18,000 men under my command in India the total abstainers had no crimes."

Sir Frederick Treves said: "I was with the relief column that moved on to Ladysmith. The first who dropped out of that column of 30,000 men were not the tall or the short, the thin or the fat men, but those who drank, and they came out as clearly as if they had been labelled."

Testimony to the same effect has been given by Lord Lawrence, Lord Wolseley, Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, etc., whilst the evidence regarding the effect of drink on labour was given in the White Paper issued by the House of Commons on May 1, 1915, one of the most appalling reports ever placed before a nation. As regards women and children, "Homes for Inebriate Women" have become a growing national necessity, and even so long ago as in 1879 a Committee of the House of Lords stated that "the growth of female intemper-

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ance is on a scale so vast, and at a rate so rapid, as to constitute a new reproach and danger.”

The late Dr. Barnardo, the late Dr. Guthrie, and the head of the N.S.P.C.C. are unanimous in declaring drink to be the cause of at least ninety per cent. of the cruelty which they have had to deal with in their work amongst the young, and surely the *Cry of the Children*, by Mr. G. R. Sims, must touch all hearts, as it records how he saw “Night after night, in bar after bar, scenes of cruelty to helpless children so terrible that he felt to remain silent about them would be an act of passive inhumanity.”

Recent legislation has modified in a degree this last evil, but the sight of children huddled round the door of the public house, waiting for their parents, is little less pitiful.

Is there any defence for the liquor trade? The only defence is that alcohol gives pleasure to those who can use it in moderation and with safety to themselves, and that such should not be penalised for the sake of those who are injured by its abuse. But surely the pleasure to the few is outweighed a hundredfold by the misery, crime, pauperism and degradation of the many which even the defenders of the trade admit are its inevitable accompaniments.

The question is often asked why the control of a



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trade so dangerous and involving such destructive consequences to the nation has been refused to the community and retained in the hands of a few. The answer is that those who hold the monopoly have grown rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and are able to silence, or win over as their supporters, statesmen who had again and again given testimony as to the national social and racial evils wrought by drink in terms which would be deemed extravagant if used by any Temperance lecturer.

So highly organised is the trade and so wealthy that it was able to hold the nation at ransom during those years when the fate of Britain and the world was trembling in the balance.

It would be idle now to discuss the reply of Mr. Brian H. F. Barttelot, head of a shipbuilding firm, to a telegram from the Government calling "for proposals that would facilitate the completion of H.M. ships."

The reply given in the White Paper already referred to (page 260) was : "I cannot state too forcibly my own opinion that the total prohibition of the sale of spirits would be the most effective act that could at the present time be taken to win this war. Any measure less drastic will not be a cure."

It would be well, however, to remember Mr.

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Barttelot's closing words to the Government :  
" It is not that the men (I am referring always to the men who drink) are bad at heart or unpatriotic, but they have failed through weakness and opportunity, and they know that they have failed, and would at heart welcome being corrected and put right."

The men were not put right. The opportunity continued to be offered to them and their weakness led them to avail themselves of what the late Lord Randolph Churchill described as " the fatal facility of recourse to the public house, which besets every man and woman, and really one may almost say every child of the working classes."

As a result liquor dividends rose to dazzling heights.

Allsopps' profits, which in 1914 were £13,048, amounted in 1917 to £127,165, having doubled in each of the intervening years. In Showell's Brewery Co. the profits in 1912 were £17,900, and in 1917 over £73,000. The chairman of the Threlfall Brewery announced in August 1917 " a trading profit of £85,878 over last year, the total profit for the year being £304,704 "; and on March 31, 1918, the directors of White, Tomkins and Courage in saying " The accounts for the year are of such a character as is bound to give the liveliest satisfaction to the proprietors," stated

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what was no doubt the feeling of most companies concerned in the liquor trade.

Lord Randolph Churchill said: "The liquor trade had terrorised the House of Commons."

The *Daily News* of April 20, 1904, published a list of 129 members of the House of Commons and 167 members of the House of Lords as proof of the statement in *The Licensed Victuallers' Gazette* that their cause was "largely safeguarded by the presence in both Houses of many men closely allied to the trade." The list included thirteen members of the Administration and nine Cabinet Ministers.

In a pamphlet entitled *The Trade and the Nation*, published by the United Kingdom Alliance, the following figures are given—

Watney, Combe, Reid and Co., Ltd., with its 1200 licensed houses, has among its shareholders 4 Dukes, 2 Marquises, 17 Earls, 5 Viscounts, 18 Barons, 26 Baronets, 16 Knights, 65 Honourables and Peers' children, 1 Archdeacon, 1 Dean, 1 President of College, 2 Canons, and numerous C.B.s, C.V.O.s, M.V.O.s, Colonels, Captains, etc.

Hoare and Co., Ltd., has 28 Peers, 14 Baronets, 6 Knights, 41 Honourables, 51 Reverends, 14 Doctors, 100 Army Officers, 3 Judges of High Court.



## THE STATE AND THE LIQUOR TRADE

Barclay, Perkins and Co., Ltd., 14 Peers, 8 Baronets, 9 Knights, 32 Reverends, including a well-known Archdeacon, 56 Army Officers, 19 Doctors.

In the same pamphlet the power of "the hidden hand" on behalf of the trade is shown in the statement—

"Hundreds of Brewery shareholders are Justices of the Peace, including 270 out of 1180 Directors; and there are also 7 M.P.s, 15 Colonels, 9 Knights, 9 Baronets, 7 Honourables, 5 Captains, 4 K.C.s, 8 Doctors, and sundry other men with handles to their names, in the latest list of directors."

This widespread financial interest in the liquor trade is the most serious and insurmountable bar to remedial legislation.

Of those who are unfortunate enough to be connected with the liquor trade none is in a more pitiable position than the man in whose name the licence for a "tied" house is taken out. He is obliged to sell enough liquor to please his employers, and to do this the law has frequently to be broken, whereupon the unfortunate publican, rarely fit for any other work, is dismissed and another victim of this evil system takes his place, probably to meet with a similar fate.

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

In the pamphlet already referred to, *The Trade and the Nation*, occurs the following statement—

The Directors of Watney, Combe and Reid control 1200 public houses; Allsopps, 1000; Mitchell and Butlers, 776; Greenall Whitleys (with 11 shareholders), 972; Smith's, Tadcaster, 671; Groves and Whitnall, 591; Threlfalls, 380; Bentley's, Yorkshire, 507; Mann and Crossman, 540; Bristol George's, 550; two hundred companies control at least nine-tenths of the liquor-distributing agencies of the country.

For at least half a century efforts have been made to get Local Option Bills through Parliament so that the people of any locality can decide by a majority vote whether or not public houses shall be placed in their midst, but the supporters of "The Trade" have withstood all attempts to control their monopoly and ask indignantly, "Would you rob the poor man of his beer?"

I would not rob the poor man of anything, but I would allow him the privilege of guarding his home and his family, if he so wished, from the danger of having a bar room at his door, and I would deprive the wealthy liquor magnate of the power to dump his "tied" houses round the dwellings of the humble instead of within sight of his own stately mansion.

## THE STATE AND THE LIQUOR TRADE

The late Lord Randolph Churchill said : “ It is alleged you cannot make the people sober by Act of Parliament. You cannot, it is true, but I will tell you what you can do : you can give the people, by Act of Parliament, the power to make themselves sober,” and this is what the supporters of Local Option want to achieve.

The late Joseph Chamberlain in supporting such a measure said : “ The principle to which I give my unqualified adhesion is that of the right of the community to have absolute control over a trade which directly affects their moral, social and physical interests ; for my own part I have abounding faith in the majority. . . . You must make your choice between two restrictions ; either individuals must be restricted from imposing a nuisance on the community against the will of the majority, or else the majority of the community must be restricted from suppressing these nuisances in deference to the interests of individuals.”

Trade supporters most illogically denounce any attempt to control their enormously paying monopoly as unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the subject, and overlook the fact that the liberty of the individual is always controlled when the exercise of such liberty becomes in any particular a nuisance, or when its limitation is



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for the public good. The liberty loving inhabitants of this country are not permitted even to keep a dog if his barking is objected to by the neighbours—much less are they permitted to keep a gambling saloon, though no pressure is put on any one to enter it, and though gambling is regarded by many as a legitimate recreation. But when any attempt is made to control the liquor trade, and especially by Local Option to place its control in the hands of the public, such attempt is condemned as an intolerable injustice.

The late Sir William Harcourt said: "If the people are to be reformed, they must be the authors of their own reformation. This is the principle of Local Option. . . . There has always been Local Option, but it has always been in the wrong hands; it has been the Local Option, not of the community, but of the local magistrates."

It is said with truth you cannot legislate above the feelings of the people. Those who support Local Option Bills do not attempt in the smallest particular to do so, for they are well aware that such a course only incites to law-breaking. The Bills aimed merely at allowing the people to legislate according to their own feelings and to retain or suppress public-houses as the majority might desire.

If the people of Britain are ever to escape from

## THE STATE AND THE LIQUOR TRADE

what Mr. Lloyd George called "the cruellest tyranny that ever oppressed a nation," it will only be when the Temperance party adopts the methods of those whose watchword is "Our Trade our Politics."

In a Directory in the *Brewers' Almanac* for 1910 one of the objects of "The Trade" is thus described: "To secure by all legal means, regardless of party politics, the return to the House of Commons and other elected bodies of candidates favourable to trade interests"; and in 1907 the great Scottish distiller, Sir Thomas (now Lord) Dewar, gave the following instructions to his colleagues: "Do not nail your colours to any particular mast; keep your flag in your own hands. Governments yield where the pressure is greatest."

In Ireland similar propaganda is issued. Prior to the 1906 general election Mr. H. L. Garrett, managing director of the largest distillery in the world (Dunville's), advised those in the trade to "sever themselves completely from all political parties . . . and when an election came round to satisfy themselves which candidates would support them, and go for him and him only, no matter what his views on other subjects might be."

Unfortunately the tactics of the Temperance party are not those of "The Trade."

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

The late Sir William Harcourt said : “ I staked my political life and my political career on a great Temperance measure (Local Option) and the Temperance party deserted me ; ” and any one who has had much experience in Temperance work knows how little the cause weighs when party politics intervene.

Any candidate known to be an incorruptible opponent of the liquor trade will have great difficulty in reaching the House of Commons, and should he reach it, he will have equal difficulty in remaining there, for the liquor traders are a great and powerful organisation and avowedly have as their chief object the retention in the House only of those favourable to them, and rapid has been the advancement and great the reward of those who have led the van in opposing Temperance Bills.

The Temperance party might be also a great and powerful body if they would focus their energies on securing and electing only those who would bind themselves to support Temperance legislation, “ no matter what their views on other subjects might be,” and if they would refuse to credit the excuse often offered by Members of Parliament that a man must always vote with his party.

There were no stronger supporters of the Con-



## THE STATE AND THE LIQUOR TRADE

servative cause from Ireland, in past years, than William Johnson, Dunbar Barton, W. G. Macartney, Hon. Robert O'Neill, Sir James Haslett, etc., and they voted consistently against their party in favour of Temperance measures and in the lobby with Joseph Biggar, William Redmond, Mr. McVeagh and other Nationalists. In those days to be an Irish Unionist was as truly a synonym for a supporter of Temperance legislation as it has become in recent years for a supporter of the liquor trade.

Those, however, who contemplate taking up an attitude of consistent relentless opposition to the liquor trade should count the cost, for it will be very heavy. There will be no form of misrepresentation, obloquy, ridicule or quiet underhand injury to which they will not be exposed.

My father, though universally popular, was subjected to these. Of another relative it was said by a political opponent at the time of his death—

“ Plainly told by his leaders in 1838 that if he supported the ‘ fifteen gallon ’ law (a great Temperance measure) he did it at his peril, he neither relented nor kept silent, but by his zeal provoked an opposition so malignant and undying that in every emergency afterwards to the very last year of his life it made a point of thwarting

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him, and was often able, by the command of a few hundred votes, to defeat his election.”<sup>1</sup>

My own experience also proves that nowhere can the Temperance cause be genuinely supported with impunity. Of this I may give the following instance.

I had been asked to address a Temperance meeting in Cambridge and gladly did so. On the following day a very brief, and, therefore, necessarily very imperfect, account of my address appeared in one London paper, and in one only—*The Daily Telegraph*. On the same afternoon (October 17, 1907), Sir William Treloar, the Lord Mayor, speaking from the civic chair in the Court of Common Council and with the press present accused me of “absolute falsehood,” as well as of various minor offences. Naturally such words from so highly placed an official were accorded the widest press publicity.

I was in the City Court a few hundred yards distant, and the suggestion was made that “The judge should be asked whether the statement was correct, as that was the usual course adopted by public men.” The Lord Mayor’s reply, as reported in the press, was: “It appears in a paper of large circulation, and I want to take the earliest opportunity of saying it is untrue.”

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs, Speeches and Writings of Robert Rantoul, junr.*, p. 855.

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My statements were incontrovertible, and I wrote next day to the *Daily Telegraph* that their accuracy or inaccuracy could be at once proved by a reference to the books to which Sir William Treloar had access. No reply, public or private, was ever vouchsafed to that letter, and I have always regretted that I let the matter rest without requiring a withdrawal of the charge.

Still more did I regret this when I heard recently mis-statements still circulated regarding me, and believed by some.

Eleven years later (in 1918) I was obliged to institute proceedings for libel against those papers, which, no doubt believing them to be true, had published the slanderous and defamatory statements made regarding me in the same Court of Common Council in connection with that address delivered in Cambridge in 1907.

NOTE.—The following address was sent to Judge Rentoul in October, 1907, no doubt as a protest against the misrepresentation to which he was then being subjected. It was signed by seventy-two persons who had been present at the meeting in Cambridge. These included a clergyman, two aldermen, and several magistrates.

“ TO HIS HONOUR JUDGE RENTOUL :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ We, the undersigned, representing Temperance workers of Cambridge, feel that we will not have done our duty until we have thanked you for the splendid speech you made in the Guildhall on October 15, 1907. The time and



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place could not have been better chosen ; a large number of students are being trained for the Legal and Medical professions, and others, who are to be the Ministers of various denominations in the future, together with all those present could not fail to be influenced by your clear and well-supported statements. Your Honour's Address, we rejoice to know, is being read and discussed throughout the length and breadth of the land, not only among the poor and lowly, but also by those in high places. We feel that you would have been guilty of a grave error had you not availed yourself of such a splendid opportunity to present both facts and figures so vitally important to the best interest of the people.

“ We have arraigned the Brewer, the Distiller, the Publican, and the poor Drunkard long enough, but you have gone to the fountain head, and Truth and Righteousness must prevail in the end. The facts presented in your Address would be new to many who were present, and you were quite justified in letting in the light of public opinion upon them.

“ We again thank you and can assure you that the meeting was in perfect sympathy with you in all that you said. Our friends are very anxious that you should come again, and if you will consent to do so we think we can guarantee that the Corn Exchange, which is much larger than the Guildhall, would be filled, and you could have the whole evening to yourself.

“ You can make what use you like of this address.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A RELIC OF BARBARISM

PROBABLY many who have reached the Bench have found it hard to realise, as I did, that apparently respectable business houses put forward, as evidence, misrepresentations which often amount to perjury, and declarations regarding the ability of debtors to pay which are a tissue of falsehood.

Believing statements which were given on oath in the Court to be true, I made in my early years on the Bench some committal orders. On inquiring later of the Clerk how many of those against whom the order had been made had gone to prison, and learning that thirteen had done so, I saw that on thirteen occasions I had been grossly deceived as to the men's ability to pay, and, as a consequence, had sadly erred in my verdict, for it cannot be supposed even a Mr. Pickwick would elect to go to prison rather than pay a sum of money due by him if it was in his power to discharge the debt. I soon, therefore, adopted the course of refusing to allow the onus of proof to be shifted from the plaintiff, on whom,

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

of course, it lies, to the defendant, *i. e.* the debtor. In other words, I would not allow a man who might have been merely unfortunate to be put on the rack, as it were, about his poverty and failure, knowing well how painful this must be in any case, and that it must be almost invariably ruinous in the case of a professional man.

On the outbreak of the war I went a step further, and stated from the Bench that under no circumstances would I give a committal order during the war, as I was unwilling to run the risk of sending a man to prison whose sons might be fighting in our defence.

Unpopular as I know this ruling to have been with that credit-giving class who resort to the whip of imprisonment as their insurance policy, no adverse criticism was ventured on in public.

No doubt other judges besides myself have given committal orders in the belief that sworn testimony by the representatives of what appeared to be respectable firms was true. In all such cases a punishment absolutely irreparable was inflicted, for imprisonment for debt leaves an indelible black mark on the man who has been merely unfortunate and who would probably have done his best to meet his liabilities however foolishly incurred.

Those who have never been cajoled into buying



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things they could not afford, and therefore should not have bought, must belong to one of two very small classes : either the class which has unlimited money, or the class which is not ashamed to admit the lack of it.

When one reflects on the forlorn position of a man who is without friend or relative able or willing to save him from the stigma of prison by risking, or even losing, a few pounds, is it not a great blot on the Statute Book of England that imprisonment for debt should be possible ?

I do not for a moment wish to defend the man who buys what he cannot afford ; but those who recklessly give on credit two or three suits of clothes, or quantities of tawdry jewellery, or shoddy furniture to some struggling clerk or young professional man should be obliged to do so at their own risk and without the security of the prison lash to which I have referred.

My predecessor in the City Court, the late Judge Kerr, whose judgments were excellent even if his method of reaching them was not always pleasing, said : " Credit is the curse of this country," and he must often have found it so when dealing with a long list of judgment summonses and listening to the perjury so prevalent in connection with them.

Well has Judge Parry named imprisonment

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for debt “A relic of ancient barbarism,” and he refers to it correctly as being “For the poor, and the poor only.”

I trust he will pardon the liberty I take in quoting extensively from *The Law and the Poor* without waiting to ask his permission to do so.

In that book, after showing the Biblical view as to debtors, he says : “If any clergyman were to preach about the iniquity of imprisonment for debt, the respectable credit draper, the pious grocer and all the noble army of tallymen would get up in their pews and walk out of his church or chapel in disgust.”

Further, he says in regard to legislation on this iniquity : “There have always been two schools of thought among politicians. One school was clear that to tamper with imprisonment meant ruin to trade; the other held, what I take to be the true gospel, that a man ought not to be allowed to obtain credit on the security of his body.”

For the fraudulent debtor Judge Parry has as little mercy as I have, and says : “One meets him every day, well-to-do and smiling, with a bill of sale on his furniture and everything in his wife’s name. But he is the curled darling of the law; he makes use of the law to protect himself and his frauds; and the Debtors’ Act

## A RELIC OF BARBARISM

has no terrors for him; whilst under its provision, hundreds of weekly wage earners are imprisoned." Such a man is no better than a thief, and lacks the courage which the burglar has occasionally displayed.

Of the other debtor (not dishonest) Judge Parry writes : " Improvident, careless, foolish and child-like those poor defendants in the County Court may fairly be described; but if a day of judgment audit could be carried out and a balance struck on the item of " honesty " as between the working-men debtors and the class of traders who gave them credit, I make little doubt which class, as a class, would show the better figures."

The closing words of Chapter III. entitled " Of Imprisonment for Debt in England," are :

" From 1869 until to-day (1914) over three hundred thousand English citizens have been actually imprisoned who have not been guilty of any crime whatsoever. They have been imprisoned, many for poverty or, if you will, for improvidence, that blessed word that so insidiously describes in the poor that failure in economic asceticism, that lack of cold self-denial of luxury and extravagance, that absence of patient thrift and simplicity of life, characteristic features which are never wanting in the beautiful lives



## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

of those social classes above them that the poor must learn to look up to and to imitate ! ”

If these quotations will lead any who may read these pages, and who are not already acquainted with Judge Parry's book, to get it and study it carefully, I shall have done them a great service in leading them to know how the law in regard to imprisonment for debt presses on the poor and how a remedy could be procured.

In this matter the remedy lies with Parliament, and the difficulties in the way of such a remedy are twofold. The first is ignorance ; the average Member of Parliament knows nothing whatever of this tragic anomaly, and is not aware that “ we may proudly claim to be one of the last civilised countries that clings to a system of imprisonment for debt.”

But if he became aware of the evil and were genuinely shocked by it, and contemplated an effort after reform, he would be pulled up at once by declarations that any alterations would be disastrous to business, and, above all, a great hardship to the poor whom credit so often benefits !

The average man in Parliament or out of it might be easily gulled by such statements, and, being unable to discover their falsehood, might be turned aside from any effort after reform.

To the Labour Party I look for the removal

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of this blot on our Statute Book; that party knows, or is supposed to know, the condition of the poor. The members of it could count on support sufficient to defeat the intrigues of “the respectable credit draper, the pious grocer and all the noble army of tallymen.” For not only would they have the backing of those in a position to become victims of the law, but they would have the entire approval and strong support of those respectable business firms whose members deplore the disgrace brought on their class by the parasites who trade on the necessity or weakness and folly, and flourish on the misery of their fellow-creatures.

Another matter which gives rise to much hardship is as follows :—

Certain London business houses of the less reputable kind secure through their travellers or by advertisement, written orders for articles to the value of a few pounds or even less than a pound and supply something quite inferior in quantity and quality.

If the purchaser does not send the money, a summons is at once issued in the City of London Court or in one of the other London County Courts and judgment for the plaintiff given as a matter of course, unless the purchaser comes to London and, it may be, brings witnesses and goes

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

to very considerable trouble and expense in order to contest a matter concerning a few pounds or it may be a few shillings.

In this way a great number of petty frauds are perpetrated, dozens probably every week, and though the Judge may be fully convinced of the fraud, still he is powerless and forced to give judgment against the defendant in his absence, because the plaintiff produces the written order and the defendant is not present to prove his side of the case.

The public do not understand that if the plaintiff has an office or any address within the area over which the jurisdiction of the London local Court extends, he can sue any person residing in any part of England and thus either compel him to come to London or to have judgment go against him in his absence.

The law allows the plaintiff to sue either in the Court within whose area he has his office or residence, or in the Court within whose area the money was agreed to be paid, or in the Court within whose area the defendant either resides or has his business.

The suing in London of defendants in the provinces is a remarkably potent engine of fraud and is used very extensively.

I have had a case from Plymouth for 4s. 6d.;



## A RELIC OF BARBARISM

a case from York for 14*s.*; a case from Warrington for 18*s.* 6*d.*; a case from Sunderland for 25*s.*; a case from Ramsgate for 30*s.*; and one from Carnarvon for 9*s.* 6*d.*, and hundreds of such cases come up every year.

At present, as the law stands, the only way to prevent these frauds is for no person to give any order except in writing, which writing shall contain the following statement: "In case of any dispute as to quality, quantity or price arising between the parties, the defendant to be sued only in the County Court within whose area he resides."

Naturally, this precaution would not occur to any one who had not learned from experience how the unwary are thus defrauded, and so the rooking of ignorant or inexperienced people continues to be quite a paying trade.

Many judges of the inferior courts all over London have strongly protested against country people being blackmailed by being dragged to London on most trumpery matters, and many persons pay, and are wise in so doing, any sum from £5 downwards rather than undertake the trouble and cost of defending the case.

. . . . .

This chapter was unfinished at the time of the writer's death.

## STRAY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

Perhaps the following passage from a Press report may be fitly quoted. It relates to the case of a woman living in Nottingham and sued for a small sum in the City of London Court.

The report was headed : *Suing Country Tradespeople in London*, and ended thus : "Judge Rentoul hoped that special attention would be drawn throughout the country to the case. The plaintiff's traveller lived in Nottinghamshire, and so did the defendant. She had been sued in London, and she wrote to say that she could not afford to come to town to defend the action. It was very iniquitous that she must either pay a debt which she might not owe or make a journey to London, when both she and the traveller were in Nottingham. He would send the case to be tried at Nottingham, and he hoped it would be a warning to every tradesman in the Midlands and the North and West of England never to give an order, as the defendant had done, unless there was an undertaking given that in the event of litigation ensuing proceedings would be taken in the local Court and not in London. The only reason, as far as he could see, for bringing the case in London was to deprive the defendant of a chance of defending."

## APPENDIX

BY THE EDITOR

SINCE the preceding pages were written, and since the writer's death, atrocious murders, followed by reprisals on the German method, have taken place in Ireland. These cannot surprise those readers of history who are aware that human nature is the same in all ages and in all countries.

When the Normans conquered England they destroyed the English Churches or adapted them to Norman forms of worship; effaced or burnt the national records—historical or literary—suppressed the language of the country and reduced the conquered race to the level which victors so often consider befitting the vanquished.

In the subsequent struggle by the English for freedom the atrocities common in all countries under similar circumstances took place and are described by Macaulay as follows :—

“ Yet the subject race, though beaten down and trodden under foot, still made its sting felt. Some bold men, the favourite heroes of our oldest ballads, betook themselves to the woods, and there, in defiance of curfew laws and forest laws, waged a predatory war against their oppressors. Assassination was an event of daily



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occurrence. Many Normans suddenly disappeared leaving no trace. The corpses of many were found bearing the marks of violence. Death by torture was denounced against the murderers, and strict search was made for them, but generally in vain; for the whole nation was in a conspiracy to screen them."

It is the proud and justifiable boast of Englishmen that their ancestors were not contented to remain a servile race.

Why has a similar feeling in the Irish been regarded for seven centuries as an offence meriting the severest punishment?

The oppression of a race, and the thwarting of its legitimate aspirations have invariably led to rebellion and crime, but the cowardly murders which have recently disgraced Ireland, and the reprisals which followed them are condemned by every right-thinking Irishman irrespective of his creed or politics—and the nation as a whole is no more responsible for these crimes than is the British nation for the crimes recorded from day to day in the British newspapers.

Lord French is reported in the Press of January 24, 1920, as saying, "The persons who attempted my life are not true Irishmen; they do not represent the real feelings of their race, they are individuals who are without the pale of all civilised nations. For their crimes we must not condemn the whole country."

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MR. STEPHEN GWYNN on his *Case for Home Rule* (pp. 110–111) referring to a speech delivered in 1906 by Judge Rentoul, in a Presbyterian Church with an episcopal clergyman in the chair, quotes him as saying :—

“ Inside twelve months, in all probability, there would come a very considerable change of government. Speaking as a politician of considerable experience, and speaking to the inhabitants of his native parish, he firmly expressed the belief that no change would be made that would do them harm or injury of any sort whatever (Hear, hear). He always believed that the cry of ‘Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right,’ was a wicked and lying cry.

“ ‘Ten years ago,’ he said, ‘he wrote to the papers on the subject, saying such a cry was not true, and trying to point the real truth out. He always held that, simply as a political argument, attacks on the Catholic Church were a foolish and ridiculous mode of procedure. They knew well that human nature lay at the bottom of the whole of them, and if the Clergymen that they belonged to were attacked they would assuredly defend them, no matter whether they liked the individuals or not.

“ He felt that in a country where the bulk of the population professed a religion different from theirs, the throb of the Orange drum right in the faces of their countrymen was wrong. When he went over to English platforms and talked

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about Ulster fighting, every one laughed at the idea; the thing was ridiculous and could not be done.”

MR. L. G. REDMOND-HOWARD in *Home Rule* (pp. 80–81), published in 1912, says :—

“ It was only last June that Judge Rentoul, formerly the member for East Down, wrote :—

“ ‘ I have spoken on many hundreds of Unionist platforms in all parts of England and Scotland, and have spoken for and with a large proportion of the Unionist members for each of the four Parliaments in which I sat, and for at least half of the members of the Governments of my Party; and there are two arguments which I never used in my life, nor was I, I believe, ever on the platform with an English member who used them, nor did any man for whom I spoke, ever wish me to use them. These arguments were— (1) That there would be danger of religious persecution in Ireland if Home Rule were granted; and (2) that “ Ulster would fight and Ulster would be right ” if Home Rule were granted. I thought we had a strong enough case, and enough solid arguments, without using arguments which, so far as I could learn, English audiences did not believe in, and which I thought weakened the good arguments which we had.’ ”



## APPENDIX

### THE LIQUOR TRADE

THE latest testimony from the medical profession regarding the liquor trade comes from Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, who, in *A Labrador Doctor*, writes (p. 79):

“ I also learned to hate the liquor traffic with a loathing of my soul. I met peers of the realm honoured with titles because they had grown rich on the degradation of my friends. I saw lives damned, cruelties of every kind perpetrated, jails and hospitals filled, misery, want, starvation, murder, all caused by men who fattened off the profits, and posed as gentlemen and great people. I have seen men’s mouths closed whose business in life it was to speak out against this accursed trade. . . . This awful war has been dragging its weary course for over four years now, and yet England has not tackled this curse which is throttling her.”

### THE ORANGE ORDER

MUCH information regarding the Orange Order will be found in Mr. Barry O’Brien’s *Life of Thomas Drummond*, Under-Secretary in Ireland. In 1836, on July 10, he (Drummond) wrote : “ I am very busy with the arrangements for the 12th of July. . . . There will be so large a force

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of military and police, with nearly thirty stipendiary magistrates, stationed at the different points at which processions are apprehended, that no great mischief can be done by them."

Mr. O'Brien states: "No great mischief was done. Twelve troops and a half of cavalry and thirty-four companies of infantry, under the direction of thirty-three stipendiary magistrates, kept the peace," and he adds that many Orangemen were arrested and prosecuted.<sup>1</sup>

From then till now, police, and often soldiers, are required to prevent the mischief which is caused by the 12th of July processions.

### REBELLION IN IRELAND OFTEN PROVOKED

GENERAL LAKE indicated his desire for procedure which would give him an opportunity for "reprisals," and Burke described the rebellion of 1641 as being "as provoked as it was afterwards absurdly misrepresented" (see page 230).

Lord Bryce, writing of the rebellion of 1798, says:

"One is loth to believe that even such men as Fitzgibbon and his associates, much less Pitt, entertained the fiendish scheme of bringing about a union by provoking a rebellion. But the steps taken were well calculated to provoke an outbreak; and when the rebellion had been quenched

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Drummond*, Life and Letters, p. 232.

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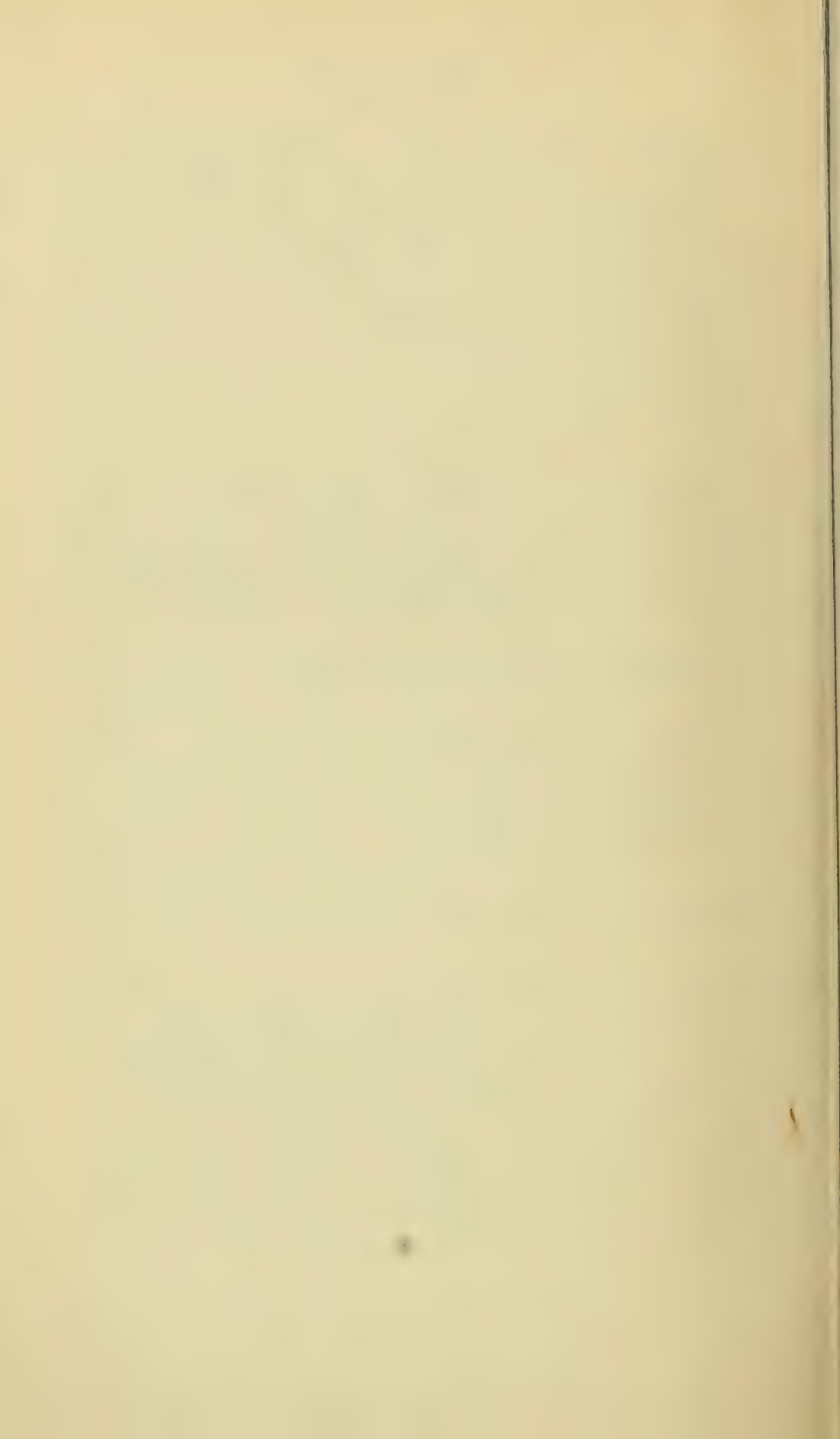
in blood, it became an irresistible argument for effecting the changes Pitt desired. The atrocities on both sides were horrible, yet the massacres perpetrated by the peasantry at Vinegar Hill yield to the hideous cruelties in which the Orangemen revelled and which the Government refused to repress or punish.”<sup>1</sup>

*A Handbook for Rebels* (Maunsell & Co., price 3d.) and *The Complete Grammar of Anarchy* (Maunsell & Co., price 1s.) throw much light on the present condition of affairs in Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 22.

L. R.





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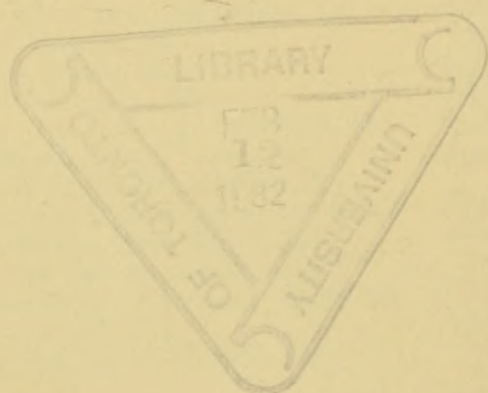
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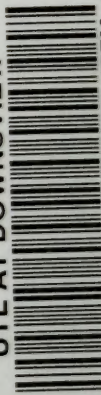
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